Biennials and Beyond — Exhibitions That Made Art History

1962–2002

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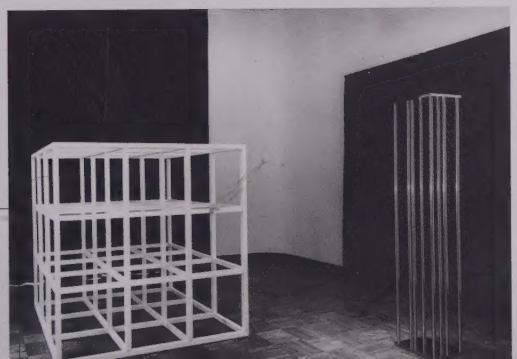

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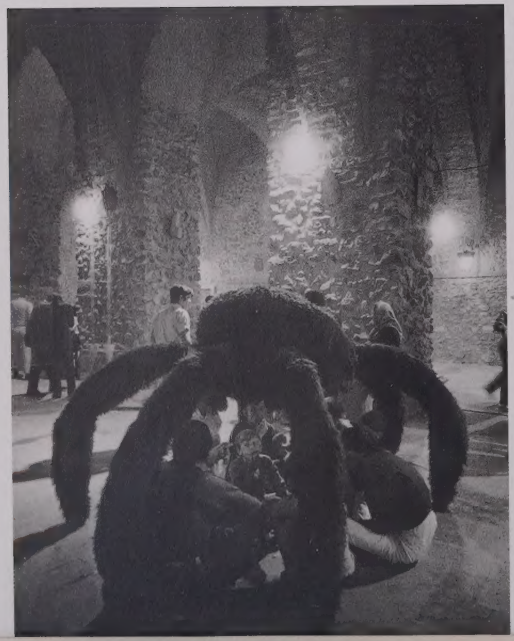

1968

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Conceived and edited by
Phaidon Editors and Bruce Altshuler
Introductory essay and chapter introductions
by Bruce Altshuler

Phaidon Press Limited
Regent's Wharf
All Saints Street
London N1 9PA

Phaidon Press Inc.
180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014

www.phaidon.com

First published 2013
© 2013 Phaidon Press Limited

ISBN 978 0 7148 6495 2

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Designed by Jennifer Wagner
for SML Office

Printed in China

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Author's Acknowledgments
This book brings to conclusion a two-volume project begun long ago, and I thank Phaidon Press for its commitment to assembling the photographs and documents that are the heart of the enterprise. In particular, I thank Colin Perry, who as project editor did so much of the work on this volume. I am also grateful to the Dedalus Foundation for fellowship support, and to the American Academy in Rome, the library at which provided an ideal environment for months of research.

One advantage of working on recent exhibitions is the opportunity to talk with so many participating artists and curators, and I thank them all for their time, insights and anecdotes. I am grateful for the encouragement of many colleagues and friends, and for those who so enthusiastically sustain the historical study of exhibitions. And for keeping me focused on the centrality of the artist amid all this talk of exhibitions, as well as for her personal support, I thank my wife, Holly Hughes.

Publisher's Acknowledgments
The publisher would like to offer special thanks to the artists, estates, foundations, scholars, archives, libraries, and museums that have so generously shared their knowledge and material. Specifically, we would like to recognize the invaluable expertise provided by Mary Jane Jacob, Vitaly Komar, Rachel Weiss, and Anthony Yung.

Note
Many sources were consulted for this publication, and every effort has been made to represent the information as accurately as possible. Spellings of artists' names and other proper names have been anglicized. In the documentary texts sections, misspellings of artists' names have been corrected, while other textual variations have been retained in order to keep the flavor of the original. Explanatory notes appear in square brackets within the text. In cases where the contents of a traveling exhibition changed after the primary venue, the artist list and number of art works reflect those of the primary venue.

Cover Illustrations
(left to right, top to bottom)

FRONT COVER
1996: View of the exhibition "Traffic," CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux (p. 329)
1986: "Chambres d'Amis," Ghent. Showing Dan Graham's *Children's Pavilion* (p. 233)
1980: "The Times Square Show," New York. The foyer area with *Amazon Lady* figure, contributed by the Amsterdam Theater (p. 194)
1989: "China/Avant-Garde," National Gallery of China, Beijing. Showing posters advertising the exhibition, with the "No U-Turn" logo (p. 270)
1971: "Sonsbeek 71," Arnhem and across The Netherlands. View of Evenstructure Research Group's Conference Hall at Sonsbeek Park (p. 147)
1966: "Primary Structures," Jewish Museum, New York. Showing Sol LeWitt's painted wooden structure *Untitled* (left) and Walter De Maria's stainless steel *Cage* (right) (p. 58)
1962: "Dylaby," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The final room in the exhibition, filled with balloons (p. 33)

FRONT COVER, INSIDE FLAP
1989: "Magiciens de la Terre," Grande Halle de la Villette and Centre Pompidou, Paris. Showing *Yam Dreaming*, by the Aboriginal Australian Yuendumu community (on the floor) and Richard Long's *Red Earth Circle* (on the wall) (p. 284)
1968: "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere," Amalfi. Pino Pascali's *Blue Widow* as installed in the Arsenale (p. 70)
1986: Second Havana Biennial, Cuba. Banners on the street were based on a design by Wifredo Lam (p. 243)
1968: "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere," Amalfi. Showing Jan Dibbet's *A White Line of Wooden Poles* (p. 73)

SPINE
1969: "When Attitudes Become Form," Kunsthalle Bern. Lawrence Weiner creates *A 36" x 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall* (p. 101)

BACK COVER
1962: "New Realists," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Showing Tom Wesselmann's *Still Life #17* (p. 45)

BACK COVER, INSIDE FLAP
1989: "Magiciens de la Terre," Grande Halle de la Villette and Centre Pompidou, Paris. View of Juan Muñoz's *Three Columns and a Dwarf* at the Grande Halle de la Villette (p. 289)
1974: "The Bulldozer Exhibition," Belyayevo, Moscow. Water trucks disperse the crowds (p. 179)
1997: "Cities on the Move," Vienna Secession. Showing Tsuyoshi Ozawa's *Nasubi Gallery* (left), Wang Du's *International Landscape* (center), and Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Cinema Poster* and tuk-tuk (right) (p. 345)
1972: Documenta 5, Kassel. Haus-Rucker-Co's *Oasis No. 7* is attached to the facade of the Museum Fridericianum (p. 164)
1991: "Places with a Past," Charleston, South Carolina, United States. Showing two works by David Hammons: a poster intervention and a version of the Black Nationalist Flag (p. 300)

Contents

Preface		07
Introduction		09
01	Dylaby, Amsterdam, 1962	25
02	New Realists, New York, 1962	37
03	Primary Structures, New York, 1966	51
04	Arte Povera + Azioni Povere, Amalfi, 1968	65
05	January 5-31, 1969, New York, 1969	79
06	When Attitudes Become Form, Bern, 1969	93
07	557,087, Seattle, 1969	111
08	Information, New York, 1970	125
09	Sonsbeek 71, The Netherlands, 1971	141
10	Documenta 5, Kassel, 1972	155
11	The Bulldozer Exhibition, Moscow, 1974	175
12	The Times Square Show, New York, 1980	187
13	A New Spirit in Painting, London, 1981	201
14	Les Immatériaux, Paris, 1985	213
15	Chambres d'Amis, Ghent, 1986	227
16	Second Havana Biennial, 1986	239
17	Freeze, London, 1988	253
18	China/Avant-Garde, Beijing, 1989	265
19	Magiciens de la Terre, Paris, 1989	281
20	Places with a Past, Charleston, 1991	295
21	Whitney Biennial, New York, 1993	309
22	Traffic, Bordeaux, 1996	325
23	Cities on the Move, Vienna, 1997	341
24	24th São Paulo Biennial, 1998	355
25	Documenta 11, Kassel, 2002	371
Notes		388
Selected Bibliography		391
Index		395

Preface

Those engaged in the study of exhibitions frequently come upon little-known documents that enrich, or even radically revise, our understanding of modern and contemporary art. But these documents often remain hidden in archives, libraries, and obscure publications. Most powerful among them are installation photographs, which provide a visual connection to crucial art historical events, allowing subtle—and occasionally not-so-subtle—aspects of display to cast new light on seemingly well-known shows and institutions. Making such images available is a central purpose of *Biennials and Beyond—Exhibitions That Made Art History: 1962–2002.* Equally essential are contemporary texts from catalogs, newspapers, and journals, supplying vital context and first-hand views of artists, organizers, critics, and their fellows. With the growing art historical interest in exhibitions and art world institutions, such documentation plays an increasingly important role in our understanding of the recent past. Scrutinizing the historical presentation of art also illuminates our own experience, prompting a more nuanced perspective on current artistic and curatorial practice.

Any project that assembles material documenting such a range of activity, and across so many years, starts with a crucial and potentially contentious selection process. Together with *Salon to Biennial—Exhibitions That Made Art History: 1863–1959,* published by Phaidon Press in 2008, this book traces a range of important exhibitions that have helped shape the way art is seen and produced today. Even though these two books have allowed us to include almost fifty different exhibitions, ranging from 1863 to 2002, the abundance of prospective entries and the amount of information about them made for extremely difficult choices. Focusing on group exhibitions of contemporary art, rather than single-artist shows, provided one constraint. Additional limits arose from practical concerns; for instance, some important exhibitions had to be omitted only for lack of documentation.

Another consideration in selecting these exhibitions was their resonance with current views of what is historically important. Art historical discussions have recently expanded to encompass the roles of the market and art world institutions, art-making by members of marginalized groups, and activities in non-Western nations and postcolonial societies. We have included some exhibitions here because they reflect on one or another of these developments, but the main thread of the exhibitions featured in *Biennials and Beyond* runs through exhibitions featuring the canonical movements and characters in modern and contemporary art. Because this is the first work to publish a large amount of exhibition documentation, it was important to include such historically significant shows, for although the exhibitions may be well known, many of the installation photographs and period texts relating to them are not. Other shows certainly could have been chosen: this selection is determined by our view of the significance of these particular exhibitions for how art was and would be produced, seen, and understood. It is a selection inflected—like the evaluation of artworks themselves—by personal background and taste.

Introduction

Bruce Altshuler

"Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art," a group show organized by Mel Bochner at the School of Visual Art, New York, 1966, was one of the first Conceptual art exhibitions.

Over the past two decades, interest in the history of art exhibitions has grown exponentially. From a subject of concern primarily to specialists, fascination with exhibitions and their histories has spread both within and beyond academia and the realm of experts.[1] The intrinsic interest of these events is readily understood, for exhibitions are the points at which all the actors in the art world intersect, from artists, dealers, critics, curators, and collectors to cultural officials and politicians. And of course there is also the dynamic presence of art's multifaceted audience, for exhibitions are where artworks meet the public. From small shows intended primarily for artists and their friends to massive displays aimed at broader audiences, exhibitions bring together a range of characters who, exercising varied intentions in diverse circumstances, generate so much of what comes down to us as art history.

Despite the great differences among group exhibitions of modern and contemporary art—distinctions of content and subject matter, size, presentational strategy, and audience—historical patterns emerge over time. One central feature concerns those who conceptualized and organized these shows. While there are important exceptions, the most significant exhibitions before and after 1960 were generally assembled by contrasting figures: artists and curators. Of course both artists and curators, or exhibition organizers, played critical roles in all of these events. But the important exhibitions of advanced art before 1960, from the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 to the shows of the Gutai Artists Association in Japan and London's Independent Group in the late 1950s, were organized largely by artists.[2] In contrast, beginning roughly in the 1960s, the groundbreaking exhibitions were often put together by professional exhibition makers working in or for institutions, from those in commercial galleries to the huge biennials at the century's end. In 1959, "The New American Painting" looked forward to an institutionalized future for advanced art in a traveling exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art to promote Abstract Expressionism in Europe. Forty-six years earlier, at The Armory Show, it had been a group of artists who brought the revolutionary new art from Europe to New York.

Over that half century the idea that art moves by steps of radical and often unsettling innovation had established itself as the norm, and an institutional structure—both private and public—had developed for its support, valorizing the new and controversial. In this the growing market for contemporary art, and the increase in the number of commercial venues for its display, played a critical role. Of course the exhibition history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was closely related to the market, as when the Impressionists and their dealers displayed art in domestically framed environments to encourage the purchase of paintings for the home, or when dealers gave over their galleries to such important artist-organized exhibitions as the "First Exhibition of the Editors of the Blaue Reiter" (Munich, 1911) and "0-10: The Last Futurist Exhibition of Pictures" (Petrograd, 1915). With the deployment of the single-artist retrospective exhibition as a commercial and ideological mechanism, art dealers and the institutions with which they collaborated worked to establish an avant-garde lineage whose progressive dynamic set the stage for both art-historical canonization and future business.[3] After World War II the number of commercial galleries exhibiting contemporary art expanded greatly beyond what it had been earlier in the century, especially in the United States. In New York City in 1949 there were approximately twenty galleries specializing in contemporary American art, and the number of collectors buying advanced work was said to be about a dozen. In the next thirty years the number of contemporary art galleries increased manyfold, and collectors were said to number in the thousands. The pace of growth is suggested by estimates of the number of single-artist exhibitions between 1949 and 1985: from 800 in the 1949–50 season, to 1,200 in 1975–76, to 1,900 in 1984–85. Even in 1977, before the contemporary art boom of the 1980s, the New York critic David Bourdon claimed to have to visit twenty to thirty galleries a day to keep up with the current scene.[4]

The post-war expansion of the contemporary art market and of venues of commercial display was complemented by that of museums and *kunsthallen*, non-collecting institutions dedicated to mounting exhibitions. For in addition to post-war museum construction, a growing number of art museums began to exhibit and collect contemporary art in a serious way.[5] Of course New York's Museum of Modern Art had been engaged in the field since the 1930s, and many European institutions, especially in Germany, had

supported advanced contemporary art before the Nazis and the war put a stop to such activity. But, after the World War II, many European museum directors and curators brought international contemporary art into their institutions in earnest, and by the 1960s the process had accelerated. Just consider the activity in the Netherlands. At Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, director Willem Sandberg, who had presented the first major show of the gestural COBRA artists in 1949, collaborated in 1962 (the year of his retirement) with artist Jean Tinguely to mount "Dylaby," in which visitors wound their way through artist-created environments.[6] The Stedelijk's next director, Edy de Wilde, exhibited U.S. Pop artists in 1964 and the international Zero Group in 1965 ("NUL 65"), and supported the adventurous shows of curator Wim Beeren, from "Forms of Color" (*Vormen van de Kleur*) in 1966 to the Arte Povera-inspired large international exhibition "*Op Losse Schroeven: situaties en cryptostructuren*" (generally translated as "Square Pegs in Round Holes: Situations and Cryptostructures") in 1969. Under the directorship of Jean Leering at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, there were exhibitions of Robert Indiana and Christo in 1966, Lucio Fontana and Jean Tinguely in 1967, Robert Morris and Joseph Beuys in 1968, and a continuation of the "Kompas" series that displayed post-war U.S. art from New York in 1967 and from the West Coast in 1969.[7] Among the shows presented by the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague was an international survey of "New Realism," including American Pop and French Nouveau Réalisme in 1964, curated by Wim Beeren before he went to the Stedelijk, and then the first European exhibition of American Minimalism in 1968, Carl Andre in 1969, and Sol LeWitt in 1970, all curated by Enno Develing.[8] These museums were part of a group of European institutions committed to such work, a network that shared contemporary art exhibitions that were shipped around the continent. For example, the 1968 Haags Gemeentemuseum exhibition of Minimalism also was shown at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and Berlin's Akademie der Künste, and would have traveled to the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris but was canceled because of the political events of May 1968.[9]

With the center of artistic momentum moving from Paris to New York after the World War II, contemporary art also was increasingly welcomed into U.S. institutions where there had been little previous interest. A telling case is that of The Jewish Museum in New York City. Created in 1904 to collect and display objects related to Jewish history and culture, ten years after the museum moved to a new home on Fifth Avenue, it celebrated that anniversary in 1957 with an important show of second-generation New York School artists, including Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. After constructing a wing designed to display temporary exhibitions, it became one of the city's most adventurous venues, presenting "Primary Structures" in 1966, a major exhibition of Minimalist and other new sculpture, and in 1970 mounting "Software," a visionary exhibition focusing on information technologies and interactivity. The museum also assumed an international role, with its director Alan Solomon organizing the United States representation at the 1964 Venice Biennale, where Robert Rauschenberg won the Golden Lion award for best artist in a national pavilion, prompting much European disgruntlement and talk of the manipulative influence of the artist's dealer, Leo Castelli.[10]

The contention surrounding Rauschenberg's prize at Venice reminds us that large, recurring international art exhibitions continued to perform important functions after the war, remaining sites of cultural and commercial competition among nations as they had been since their origins in nineteenth-century world's fairs.[11] Such massive art shows would increase in number dramatically after World War II, in a boom that eventually would rival that of those first international expositions a hundred years earlier. In 1951, the São Paulo Biennial was created in Brazil on the model of the Venice Biennale, with artists selected as national representatives in the kind of art world Olympics that had been familiar since the establishment of the Venice exhibition. (In fact, the first Venice Biennale and the first Summer Olympics were held only a year apart, in 1895 and 1896 respectively.) The intentions at São Paulo were multiple, and were international, national, and local. Founded by industrialist Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho (known as Ciccillo Matarazzo), the show was meant to bring international contemporary art to Brazil and to South America, to promote Brazilian and Latin American artists on the broader international stage, and to establish São Paulo as the cultural capital of Brazil over its rival Rio de Janeiro. The creation of Documenta in Germany in 1955 similarly evinced local, national, and international goals. Held in the city of Kassel, a munitions and administrative center devastated by Allied bombing, the exhibition was to play an important role in the economic reconstruction of the city. The show also was intended to educate Germans about modern art following years of its suppression under National Socialism. And its greater, and related, objective was a symbolic one: to mark the rehabilitation of Germany as a civilized nation after the horrors of Nazism and the war.[12]

The first Documenta was organized by Arnold Bode as a supplement to the German Federal Horticultural Show, and it was not meant initially to establish an ambitious exhibition series.[13] But starting with its ad hoc first manifestation in the partially destroyed Museum Fridericianum in Kassel, Documenta would develop into a massive display of international contemporary art, held at intervals of four or five years with government financing of increasingly grand budgets. Yet Documenta never was organized according to the structure of national representation that governed Venice and São Paulo. In this it echoed an innovation introduced to the Carnegie International in the 1950s by Gordon Bailey Washburn, who transformed the august Pittsburgh exhibition, established the year after the first Venice Biennale, by no longer installing artworks according to their countries of origin.[14]

Washburn's reason for eliminating the national display structure in Pittsburgh was an aesthetic one, seeking to improve the look of the show by arranging works based on their visual relationships. And while Documenta employed a similar kind of

"Tucumán Arde" ("Tucumán Burns"), was an exhibition by a collective of artists in Argentina in 1968, conceived of as an intervention in mass communication and a form of counter-information against the official messages of the Argentine dictatorship.

"Prospect 68" was organized by dealer-curator Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow in Kuntshalle Düsseldorf in 1968. Works shown are by Gerald Laing and Jann Haworth.

formalist hang in its early years, so soon after the war there was also a political dimension to a German show avoiding the appearance of chauvinistic competition among nations. Despite their differences, however, the four large recurring international exhibitions remained essentially similar in one way. Whether in Venice, Pittsburgh, São Paulo, or Kassel, a primary purpose was to report on recent artistic innovation and achievement. Beyond motivations connected with economic development and tourism, or with local and national pride, reporting the state of contemporary art remained a central rationale for these immense events. Toward the end of the 1960s, however, this would no longer seem sufficient justification.

In a fascinating comment, Umbro Apollonio, an official of the Venice Biennale, suggested that by the late 1960s the function of reporting on contemporary art was being performed quite adequately by art dealers and by museums.[15] With the worldwide increase in the number of commercial gallery and museum exhibitions of current art, and with so much imagery and information available in art magazines and exhibition catalogs, it was no longer necessary to travel to Venice or Kassel to find out what was happening.[16] What was needed, however, was conceptual insight provided by some interpretive plan. In his view, the Biennale should move to structuring the selection and display of works according to a unifying theme, for non-thematic presentations— especially those organized by country of origin—did little to foster an understanding of the diverse and bewildering world of contemporary artistic practice.[17] With growing public interest in contemporary art this concern with overarching interpretative themes only increased, and the widespread adoption of this exhibitionary model in the realm of advanced art parallels the increased concern with the audience that developed in museum practice during the same period. One major story running through the art history of the second half of the twentieth century is that of the largescale thematic exhibition, and of the rise of a cadre of experts who would assemble them.

The person generally credited with fostering this development, both as progenitor and as inspiration, is Harald Szeemann. A Swiss curator—or, as he preferred to be called, exhibition-maker (*ausstellungsmacher*)—with a background in theater, Szeemann became director of Kunsthalle Bern in 1961 in his late twenties, and eight years later mounted the show that brought him to widespread international notice, "When Attitudes Become Form: Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information." "Attitudes" presented a range of new artistic practices—among them Conceptual art, American and European post-Pop and post-Minimalist sculpture, and earth art—as expressions of personal attitude rather than as the production of objects. Turning the Kunsthalle into a giant studio and center of cultural interaction, Szeemann invited the artists to make their works on site, a strategy in line with his emphasis on process over material output.[18] But while "Attitudes" is often viewed as a thematic exhibition, and the first major example of what would become this central post-war exhibition form, it equally can be seen as an interpreted report on

certain kinds of current artistic practice. In this it functioned as did, say, the 1936 "Cubism and Abstract Art" exhibition organized by Alfred Barr Jr. at The Museum of Modern Art, which presented a conceptual framework to facilitate understanding of what seemed to much of the public to be incomprehensible. The show with which Szeemann truly introduced the thematic exhibition form in a major way took place three years later: Documenta 5.

The 1972 Documenta was the first of the exhibition series to break significant curatorial ground, and it did so by presenting a vast array of artworks and much else in service to a particular theme, the social construction of reality through images; its title was "Questioning Reality—Pictorial Worlds Today" (*Befragung der Realität–Bildwelten heute*). With conceptual assistance from Hamburg aesthetics professor Bazon Brock, and the curatorial help of Lucerne museum director Jean-Christophe Ammann, Düsseldorf art dealer Konrad Fischer, and others, Szeemann presented an elaborate exhibitionary structure populated both by art and non-art objects. Organized into sections and subsections, the show presented a baroque and somewhat confusing configuration that prompted some artists to protest the instrumental use of their work for purposes other than their own. Surveying a broad swath of advanced artistic production, Documenta 5 established the model of the ambitious thematic exhibition assembled to order and interpret artworks according to a grand curatorial conception. It was a model that would be employed around the world through the next three decades in exhibitions of all sizes, organized by members of a new, expanding profession, that of the independent curator.[19]

When Szeemann left the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969 after vituperative criticism of "Attitudes" and the rejection of his plan for a Joseph Beuys exhibition, he decided not to take another institutional position.[20] Establishing the ironically named Agency for Spiritual Guest Work (*Agentur fur Geistige Gastarbeit*), he began working independently on exhibition projects. The first of these was "Happening & Fluxus" at the Cologne Kunstverein in 1970, a grand and unwieldy presentation of events, performances, and environments, which spawned Szeemann's preliminary conception for Documenta 5 as "100 days of events" to be held throughout Kassel. These shows would be followed over the next thirty-five years by almost eighty Szeemann-organized exhibitions, small and large, from an intimate homage to his grandfather mounted in his own Bern apartment ("Grandfather, a Pioneer Like Us," 1974) and the visionary, Duchamp-inspired "Bachelor Machines" (Kunsthalle Bern, 1975), through important monographic exhibitions of major European and American artists during the 1980s and 1990s, to his active involvement with the expanding world of international biennials.[21]

Szeemann's background in theater not only attracted him to performance- and event-based artworks, but more importantly it generated a deep understanding of the performative dimension of exhibitions and exhibition making. It also disposed him to think of curatorial work as a creative pursuit, the bringing to bear of original ideas on pre-existing material much in the manner of a theatrical

Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, 1968–72, a series of solo projects that played with museological conventions. The work was included in Harald Szeemann's Documenta 5, 1972.

Wim Beeren curated "Op Losse Schroeven" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1969. Shown here is the installation process of Robert Smithson's *Mirror Displacement*, in the Dutch town of Heerlen. The other part of Smithson's work was installed at the Stedelijk Museum galleries.

Protesters at the 34th Vennice Biennale, 1968.

director or cinema *auteur*.[22] Of course Szeemann's material consisted of artworks and artists, not scripts and actors. And as is suggested by artist complaints about the interpretation of their work in Documenta 5, more imaginative curatorial concepts and more active curatorial interventions would raise important questions about the responsibility of curators to the objects of their efforts. Along with the American artists who protested Szeemann's putting their works under the heading of "Individual Mythologies," French artist Daniel Buren sounded a general alarm in response to Documenta 5: "More and more, the subject of an exhibition tends not be the display of artworks, but the exhibition of the exhibition as a work of art."[23] Buren was not the only one to notice this development, and critic Peter Plagens had concluded in 1969 with regard to curator Lucy Lippard's Seattle exhibition "557,087" that "Lippard is in fact the artist and that her medium is other artists."[24] The charge that curators were assuming the role of the artist, and were employing artworks for their own purposes, would echo through the next forty years, as new generations of independent curators conceived of their work in increasingly creative terms. In 1993, the critic Thomas McEvilley described an exhibition in Venice as "a kind of metapainting by the curator, incorporating the works of others as colors on its palette."[25]

Plagens connected Lippard's role in 1969 to the growing practice of artists being invited by curators to contribute to their exhibitions, rather than curators selecting particular artworks for inclusion in their shows. This was the curatorial mode that governed some of the most important exhibitions of that year, being much remarked upon with regard to "Anti-Illusion: Procedures–Materials" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in which curators Marcia Tucker and James Monte emphasized that they were unable to see most of the artworks beforehand, and it was the practice largely employed by Szeemann in "Attitudes" and Beeren in "*Op Losse Schroeven*."[26] This does not seem so radical to us today, having become a principal working method of international curators during the late 1980s and 1990s. But at the time it was a very new way of mounting exhibitions, and it demanded a new set of collaborative skills. As Beeren said with regard to his exhibition, "Up until then all you did was place something or hang something, but this time the operation was carried out by the artists together with the curator."[27]

Of course this new manner of assembling exhibitions had much to do with the nature of the art being shown, with process-based works, such as Richard Serra's splashed lead and Barry La Va's scatter pieces, having to be produced on site. But it also seemed to some to reflect an increasingly conceptual view of what was most important about the artwork itself, with pieces often chosen for exhibitions based on artist proposals—based on the idea of the work—rather than by the selection of existing works.[28] As an emblem of this development, we might take an exhibition mounted by artist Mel Bochner at New York's School of Visual Art in December 1966, "Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art." In this show sketches, fabrication instructions, and other documents relating to the production of artworks were photocopied and presented on pedestals in four loose-leaf binders. Here ideas and information were marked with the sign of the artwork: elevation onto a pedestal.[29]

The conceptual turn in the art of the 1960s and 1970s was manifested in exhibition practice in another way, and this involved the form of presentation itself. In such cases the form of the exhibition stemmed conceptually from the nature of the pieces in the show.[30] "Attitudes" can be seen in this light, for by turning the Kunsthalle into a workshop for the artists, Szeemann displayed the notion of a process grounded in a given attitude, reflecting the way in which he interpreted the art in the exhibition. This point was reinforced in the catalog by his documenting the development of the exhibition as well as the artworks, publishing the address list he had used when visiting artists in New York and letters written by artists responding to his invitation to exhibit in the show.[31] A conceptual connection between artworks and their presentation is also clearly evident in the exhibitions-as-catalogs produced by Conceptual art impresario Seth Siegelaub.[32] Beginning with *Douglas Huebler: November 1968*, Siegelaub produced publications that were essentially exhibitions in themselves, because he took the works that they contained to be fundamentally ideas, equally able to be presented through words or documentation as shown in physical form inside a gallery or outdoors. Siegelaub's catalog for "January 1-31, 1969" listed eight works by each of four artists, although each artist realized only two works in the office space in which the physical show was held. The situation was the same with Siegelaub's "March 1-31, 1969," in which thirty-one artists created a work on one day of that month,

and with his "July, August, September 1969," in which eleven artists each made a piece to be shown simultaneously in eleven different sites worldwide. In each of these cases, the exhibition existed in its complete form only as a catalog, a circumstance stemming from and reflecting the conceptual nature of the artworks themselves. The notion of a publication as an exhibition space would spread, with Siegelaub himself producing two additional models: What is now known as "The Xerox Book," published in December 1968, in which seven artists were each given twenty-five pages for a work produced by photocopier; and the July–August 1970 issue of *Studio International*, a magazine exhibition for which Siegelaub asked each of six critics to curate eight pages.[33] And publications such as *Avalanche*, put out by Willoughby Sharp and Liza Béar in 1970-76, and the *Art & Project Bulletin*, published by the Amsterdam gallery Art & Project in 156 issues between 1968 and 1989, were often viewed as functioning like exhibitions, low-cost and easily distributed vehicles of display.[34]

An early precedent for conceptually relating exhibition form and content can be found in a show mounted in May 1962 by Yoko Ono at the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo, where she presented more than thirty sheets of paper on which instructions for the creation of artworks were neatly written in Japanese.[35] Here the conceptual nature of these pieces directly generated the form in which they were displayed (verbal statements on white sheets of paper). Later in the decade, as Conceptualism became more widespread, instruction works provided another means of conceptual connection between exhibition form and content. For "Art by Telephone" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, director Jan van der Marck received by telephone instructions for creating their works from thirty-six European and American artists. Planned for 1968, the show was never realized in the galleries, but in 1969 the museum produced a vinyl record with the telephoned instructions, an object that—like Siegelaub's publications—became the exhibition.[36] But the most ambitious show involving instruction works was Lucy Lippard's fall 1969 Seattle exhibition "*557,087*," its name derived from the population of the city. (A second version of the show was "*955,000*," held soon after in Vancouver and titled for its population, with the series continuing in late 1970 with a smaller exhibition in Buenos Aires, "*2,972,453*.") Most of the pieces in these exhibitions were created, or at least attempted, by Lippard and co-workers based on instructions provided by the artists. Thus these shows and their contents fundamentally took the form of instruction works, the exhibitions being generated largely by following instructions and the pieces in them, for the most part, being works of this kind. This exhibition model was revived in 1993 by Hans Ulrich Obrist as a regularly updated traveling show of instruction works called "do it."[37] Consisting of a set of instructions to be followed by museums or galleries wanting to mount the exhibition, it included works both by artists associated with early instruction art and Fluxus and by contemporary artists involved in later forms of Conceptualism. The exhibition migrated to more private spaces in 2002 through a "home version" made available on the Internet by e-flux (Electronic Flux Corporation), and continues to develop.

Obrist exemplifies the kind of independent curator for whom Szeemann blazed the trail, someone who has forged a dynamic career creating exhibition projects both outside and within institutions. But it would take some time, following Szeemann's resignation from Kunsthalle Bern, for there to develop a significant number of curators working apart from regular institutional positions. For the system was geared to institutional authority and few were able, willing, or even interested in committing themselves to such a situation. Wim Beeren left the Stedelijk Museum after "Op Losse Schroeven" to curate the innovative sculpture exhibition "Sonsbeek '71," but he later returned to museum work. It was more common for those maintaining a base in a museum or other institution to collaborate on, or wholly curate, exhibitions elsewhere. Such was the case with Jean-Christophe Ammann, who assembled sections of Documenta 5; Pontus Hulten who worked on "Bewogen Beweging" ("Moved Movement") at the Stedelijk Museum while also director of Stockholm's Moderna Museet; and Rudi Fuchs, director of the Van Abbemuseum, who curated Documenta 7 in 1982. Art dealers were also involved in organizing major exhibitions outside of their commercial galleries, which is most notable in the curatorial activity of Konrad Fischer. While maintaining his Düsseldorf gallery, Fischer organized with critic Hans Strelow the major international show "Prospect 1968" at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (with later versions in 1969, 1971, 1973, and 1976), curated "Konzeption-Conception: Documentation of a Current Tendency" in 1969 at the Stadtisches Museum, Leverkusen, and "'Konzept'-Kunst" at the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1972, and also worked on Documenta 5.[38]

Another important source of independent curatorial practice was art criticism, with writers mounting exhibitions in both commercial and non-commercial spaces as advocates for the artists whom they supported. Pierre Restany's advocacy of the French *Nouveau Réaliste* artists led to his putting together the group's introductory show at the Galleria Apollinaire in Milan in 1960 and the next year in Paris to the exhibition "Forty Degrees Above Dada," held in his wife's Galerie J, and to his assembling French artists for "New Realists" at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York in 1962. In Italy in 1967, critic Germano Celant mounted the first show of Arte Povera artists at the Galleria La Bertesca in Genoa, "*Arte Povera e IM Spazio*," and organized the innovative "*Arte Povera + Azioni Povere*," which was installed in Amalfi's medieval arsenal in early October 1968. In Rome, the critic Achille Bonito Oliva worked with a new organization dedicated to promoting contemporary art, Incontri Internazionale d'Arte, to curate "Vitalita del Negativo nell'Arte Italiana 1960–70" in 1970 and to assemble in 1973 the visual art section of "Contemporanea,"a huge international multimedia exhibition set in the new underground parking garage of the Villa Borghese. While critic-curators were less important in the United States than in Europe during this period, an exception is Lucy Lippard, who in 1966 put together the groundbreaking

post-Minimalist sculpture show at the Fischbach Gallery in New York, "Eccentric Abstraction," and whose instruction-based exhibitions in 1969–70 in Seattle, Vancouver, and Buenos Aires both facilitated and were an important part of developing conceptualist practices.[39]

Artists also continued in this period to organize exhibitions both of their own work and of that of their fellows. Some of these shows developed a legendary status, such as the December 1968 New York exhibition "9 at Leo Castelli" curated by Robert Morris in the dealer's warehouse. And in Turin in 1968–69, *Arte Povera* artists mounted exhibitions of their work in a former car showroom, "Deposito d'Arte Presente" ("Warehouse of Present-Day Art"), a short-lived cultural space supported by the collector Marcello Levi and others to whom he appealed for funds, with the participation of the dealer Gian Enzo Sperone.[40] But few artists became well known as independent curators during the 1960s and 1970s.[41] An important exception was American filmmaker and video artist Willoughby Sharp, who organized many exhibitions presenting and promoting work in which he was interested. These included five shows of artists working with light and with motion in 1967–68, including "Light-Space-Motion" at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and "Kineticism: Systems Sculpture in Environmental Situations" in conjunction with the Summer Olympics in Mexico City; an "Air Art" exhibition that traveled to five venues in 1968–69; his most important show, the first exhibition of "Earth Art," held in 1969 at the Andrew Dickson White Museum at Cornell University; and projects by twenty-seven artists on an abandoned pier on New York's Hudson River, "Pier 18" (February–March 1971), with photo documentation by Harry Shunk and Janos Kender displayed at The Museum of Modern Art a few months later.

"Contemporanea," 1973–4, was curated by Achille Bonito Oliva at the Villa Borghese in Rome. Shown here is Gino de Dominici's installation.

It is critical to distinguish such artist-curated shows from exhibitions mounted by artists that were meant to be taken as artworks in themselves. Paradigmatic here is Marcel Broodthaers's "Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles," whose first incarnation was installed in the artist's Brussels residence in 1968. This project took the form of a series of exhibitions, the most impressive being a show of close to three hundred images of eagles at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1972.[42] Since the 1960s works by artists that took an exhibitionary form would become a distinctive variety of installation art, running the gamut from Claes Oldenburg's "Mouse Museum" at Documenta 5, with its Ray Gun Wing presenting his collection of found objects resembling ray guns, to Douglas Blau's "Fictions" (1987), a dense display of contemporary and historical pictures at two New York galleries, and the numerous museum projects of Fred Wilson, the best known of which, "Mining the Museum" (1992–93), deployed the collection of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore in a poignant examination of the state's racially troubled past.[43] A different variety of artwork-as-exhibition might be seen to have arisen in the 1990s with the development of works exemplifying what critic–curator Nicolas Bourriaud called "relational aesthetics."[44] In these shows, primarily held in Europe, artists and their curator friends assembled exhibitions whose intent was to create social interactions of the kind prompted by the pieces that they contained.[45] As with the conceptualist exhibitionary practices discussed earlier, the form of these shows is similar to that of their constituent parts.

With the expansion during the 1980s of the art market and of exhibition activity, a demand grew for knowledgeable individuals able to assemble contemporary exhibitions. And much of this demand was generated by commercial galleries eager to present group shows of the most recent developments. Among the most active of the new independent curators were Tricia Collins and Andrew Milazzo, who as the curatorial team Collins & Milazzo put together forty-four exhibitions between 1983 and 1994.[46] Conceptually grounding their selections in dense catalog essays, Collins & Milazzo assembled exhibitions that were critical in presenting and promoting the early

work of Jeff Koons, Peter Halley, and many other artists. Mounted for the most part in New York commercial galleries, their shows bore such evocative titles as "Still Life with Transaction: Former Objects, New Moral Arrangements, and the History of Surfaces" (International with Monument, 1984). And with the example of curators working apart from institutional constraints and enjoying the glamorous art world of the late 1980s, with its attendant parties and travel, independent curating of contemporary art became a seductive career choice. This emergence of what promised to be a growing profession prompted the international development of academic training programs, with L'École du Magasin, Grenoble, creating a ten-month course in 1987, London's Royal College of Art establishing a master's degree in 1992, and 1994 seeing the creation of the De Appel Curatorial Training Programme in Amsterdam and the Center for Curatorial Studies master's program at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.[47]

Group exhibitions of the sort organized by Collins & Milazzo and other independent curators, the kind that students would be trained to assemble in curatorial studies programs, sought to report current artistic developments and present thematic narratives through which these developments were to be understood. But while the dominance of such shows was forecast in 1972 by the cumbersome thematic structure of Documenta 5 and the first thematic titling of the central exhibition at the Venice Biennale—"Work or Behavior" ("Opera o comportamento")—it would be two decades before the apotheosis of this exhibitionary mode. In that time the world economy and geopolitical structure changed radically, with significant consequences for the art world and its exhibitions. This transformation, of course, falls under the heading of *globalization*.[48] And its primary art world vehicle has come to be referred to, generically, as *the biennial*: a large-scale international exhibition that recurs regularly, even when the interval of recurrence exceeds two years.

Since the nineteenth century, large-scale art exhibitions have fostered international connections, with cultural interaction and trade in artworks across national borders being essential aspects of these events and the systems of which they formed a part. After World War II, major recurring exhibitions expanded to achieve the same kinds of political, economic and cultural goals as did their predecessors. But until the 1980s the world in which these shows operated was essentially a Euro-American one, for—apart from the São Paulo Biennial, joined by the Biennale of Sydney in 1973—the most well-known international exhibitions took place in Western Europe and the United States. This is what would change in the last two decades of the twentieth century. With the coming of age of postcolonial states in Africa and the Caribbean, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, and with significant ideological change and economic development in China, along with the economic growth of other Asian nations, new demands—economic, political, and ideological—arose for the expansion of the international exhibitionary system.

The exhibition "Zeitgeist" at Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, 1983, with paintings by Georg Baselitz. "Zeitgeist" was curated by Christos M. Joachimides and Norman Rosenthal, two of the organizers of the earlier "A New Spirit in Painting," held at the Royal Academy, London, 1981.

This worldwide interest in the display of art from outside Western Europe and North America paralleled the increasingly assertive claims of multiculturalism in the United States, where developments in the 1980s set the stage for important exhibitions of the 1990s. In 1990, three New York City museums—The New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art—mounted "The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 80s." Displaying the work of more than one hundred artists, this collaborative show sought to present "the other 1980s," a decade whose public image of art world and art-market excess masked a broad range of artistic activity around matters of race, gender, and sexual orientation. But the exhibition that epitomized this cultural direction was the 1993 Biennial of the Whitney Museum of American Art, often referred to in the United States as "the political Biennial." Much derided at the time, the exhibition has come to be viewed as one of the most important of the decade, signaling the ascendance of confrontational identity politics within advanced American art and the mainstream embrace of work treated formerly as marginal.

The cultural politics of these institutional exhibitions in the United States, and of such politically oriented shows as those of the artist collective Group Material, contrasts with the use of contemporary art exhibitions as political statements under repressive regimes, where artists confronted state power in mounting exhibitions as gestures of artistic freedom or as explicit acts of political protest.[49] Exemplary in this regard is Moscow's 1974

"Bulldozer Exhibition," an artist-organized outdoor exhibition that was destroyed by the police with bulldozers and water cannons. While Soviet policy with regard to exhibitions of "unofficial" artists varied, with permission to use public venues sometimes given and sometimes denied depending on the local political winds, artists also mounted "apartment exhibitions" in private residences.[50] Across the Soviet Bloc there was significant variation in policies governing exhibitions and the work of advanced artists. Yugoslavia and Poland were more permissive in this regard, and Hungarian authorities more oppressive. Despite widespread surveillance of the populace, in East Germany local cultural centers hosted exhibitions of advanced art in Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin, and there were numerous apartment exhibitions. In 1984 a group of artists even managed through subterfuge to circumvent the official system to present an exhibition in a trade-fair building in the center of Leipzig, titling it "The First Leipzig Autumn Salon" after the 1913 show organized by avant-garde impresario Herwarth Walden.[51]

In Latin America, during the period of the military dictatorships, many exhibitions of contemporary art eluded censorship by avoiding explicit political reference or by displaying works whose conceptual strategies made their content essentially invisible to the authorities. But there was repression when politics was engaged directly, as at the "Experiencias '68" exhibition at the Instituto Di Tella in Buenos Aires. Here Roberto Plate's installation of a restroom in which visitors scrawled grafitti against the dictatorship was closed, prompting other artists to remove and destroy their works. More explicitly political was the "Tucuman Arde" ("Tucuman is Burning") exhibition documenting the results of the government's oppressive economic policies in Tucuman province, a show mounted in November 1968 by an artists' collective in a union building in Rosario and then closed in Buenos Aires after two days due to government pressure. In like fashion in 1972, the Buenos Aires police shut down the outdoor exhibition "Art and Ideology" at the Center for Art and Communication (CAYC) after two days. In Brazil in 1969, the exhibition "Salao da Bussola" at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, mounted to present the artists selected for the Biennial of Paris, was closed by the authorities and the work was prohibited from being sent to Paris. In response to this event and increasing cultural repression, the critics Mario Pedrosa in Brazil and Pierre Restany in France prompted a successful international boycott of the 1969 São Paulo Biennial.[52] Across the Atlantic, in 1974 the president of the Venice Biennale, socialist Carlo Ripa di Meana, adopted "Freedom for Chile" as the theme of the exhibition in response to the recent military coup that had overthrown the government of Salvador Allende. (The Venice Biennale would take another political stand in 1977 when it featured dissident artists from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, prompting a boycott of the next Biennale by the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.)

In China during the late 1970s and 1980s there was both suppression and tolerance as experimental art developed in conjunction with the country's modernization. In Beijing in 1979, the "Stars" group exhibition on the street outside the National Art Museum was closed by the police, but liberal reforms began in 1985 following the end of the "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign." What has been dubbed the "'85 Movement" was constituted by the activity of numerous artist groups across China whose members rejected the official art system and experimented with Western avant-garde models. Between 1985 and 1987 these groups organized about 150 exhibitions and events in which more than 2,000 artists participated. But such activity would end in June 1989 with the Tiananmen Square protests. In an eerie suggestion of what was to come, three months before Tiananmen the police temporarily closed the major exhibition "China/Avant-Garde" at the National Art Museum, provoked at the opening by an artist shooting a gun at her own work.[53]

In Western liberal democracies—apart from artist protests during the Vietnam War, from disruption of the 1968 Venice Biennale to the 1969–71 actions of the Art Workers' Coalition at New York museums—political engagement around exhibitions generally centered on cultural politics. One seminal episode was the critical reaction to a 1984 exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Juxtaposing 218 tribal objects with 147 modern and contemporary artworks, "Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern" presented historical influences and formal analogies, while intentionally ignoring the ethnographic context. In viewing these objects only through the lens of Western aesthetics and art history, however, the exhibition's program was attacked as displaying the same colonialist mindset that had been employed to justify European control of native peoples.[54] In a delayed response to "Primitivism," four years later curator Jean-Hubert Martin assembled the Paris exhibition generally viewed as initiating a boom in the display of "non-Western" contemporary art, "Magiciens de la Terre" ("Magicians of the Earth"). At the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Parc de la Villette, Martin sought to present on common ground fifty artists from the Western centers and fifty from Africa, Australia, Latin America, and Asia. Despite good intentions, however, the show was unable to escape postcolonial critique, its very title suggesting a view of artists outside the West as living in a world of magic and superstition.

While "Magiciens" brought contemporary art from the margins into the center, it was the First Havana Biennial in 1984 that prefigured the expansion of major exhibitions beyond Europe and North America.[55] Sponsored by a postcolonial communist state and intended to provide a vehicle for Third World artists to display their work and establish channels of communication, the Havana exhibition presented 2,200 works by 835 artists, and it anticipated future biennials elsewhere in a number of ways. In its anti-imperialist rhetoric and attempt to bring together artists from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia—an intention only realized in its second incarnation—the Havana Biennial became an ideological prototype, a model whose postcolonial politics would focus increasingly on the dislocations of globalization. The organizers of the Havana Biennial

also sought to engage local artists and residents in workshops, discussions, and events held throughout the city, and this dynamic between the local and the global would become an important element in the structuring and theorizing of future biennials.[56] But the clearest way that the Havana Biennial anticipated the development of future biennials was in its location. For the most noteworthy aspect of the new biennials was their siting away from the traditional centers, their engagement with artists, places, and populations formerly excluded from the major exhibitions and markets of the international art world. Created in 1987, a year after the Second Havana Biennial, the Istanbul Biennial can be taken as paradigmatic of these new biennials, with its dramatic location on the periphery of Europe and its use of important international curators to create compelling themed exhibitions.[57]

In the 1990s, more than forty biennials would be created around the world, and many more were added in the first decade of the new century. As developing nations and municipalities established biennials as instruments of economic growth and marks of cultural status, cities in Europe and North America also created such recurring exhibitions, among others Lyon in 1991, Santa Fe in 1995, and Berlin and Liverpool in 1998. But most activity would be outside the centers, where biennials became a favored way to expand tourism, improve physical and cultural infrastructure, stimulate foreign investment, and promote the work of national and local artists. These new biennials appeared in every region. The Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil (established 1997), was associated with the economic trading group composed of countries of the "Southern Cone" (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay); Dak'Art in Dakar, Senegal, was created as a biennial of contemporary African art in 1992; the Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates sought to bring together work from throughout the Arab world beginning in 1993; and the Shanghai Biennial in 2000 developed from a conservative national exhibition to a high-visibility international venue for Chinese contemporary art. There were biennials established across the former Soviet Union and its satellites, from Gyumri, Armenia, in 1998 to Tirana, Albania, in 2001, whose biennial was created by an ex-artist who had become the city's mayor, supported by the publisher of *Flash Art* magazine, Giancarlo Politi. And employing this exhibitionary model without being tied to any one location was the itinerant biennial Manifesta, which since 1996 has used curatorial teams to mount events in central and in peripheral Europe.[58] By 2010, there were approximately sixty exhibitions worldwide that met the generally accepted criteria for a biennial: regular recurrence, ambitious scale, and international participation.

After Havana and Istanbul, among the biennials receiving the most attention were those of Johannesburg and Gwangju, both established in 1995. The creation of each of these shows had significant political resonance, with the Johannesburg Biennial established a year after the end of apartheid in South Africa and Gwangju being the site of the May 1980 massacre of demonstrators

The New York-based collective Group Material created innovative exhibitions in the 1980s, including "Timeline: A Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America," P.S.1, New York, 1984.

Metalwork display from Fred Wilson's 1992-3 solo exhibition "Mining the Museum," a project in which the artist intervened in the permanent collection of The Contemporary and Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, to highlight the history of slavery and its aftermath in the Unites States.

against the later-deposed South Korean dictatorship. In this regard both exhibitions were meant to signal international acceptance of nations previously held to be problematic, and to celebrate democratic political developments. But the two shows differed significantly in their scale and support. The Johannesburg Biennial was funded by the city and state for only two iterations, canceled after 1997 despite protests from the international art community.[59] South Korea, however, has provided the ongoing Gwangju Biennial with a massive budget averaging $12 million, comparable among biennials only to the budget of Documenta; and the first Gwangju exhibition attracted 1.64 million visitors, the largest biennial attendance of the decade.[60]

Like the Istanbul Biennial, those of Johannesburg and Gwangju were known for the kind of grand curatorial initiatives that became a hallmark of the time. For example, the second and last Johannesburg Biennial in 1997 was organized by the Nigerian-American curator Okwui Enwezor under the title "Trade Routes: History and Geography." Focusing on the postcolonial situation and issues of globalization, the show consisted of six component exhibitions, each assembled and conceptualized by different curators from separate world regions who, as a nod to globalization, explicitly were not representing their own areas or nations.[61] And in the most ambitious section of the four-project 2002 Gwangju Biennial, "P_A_U_S_E," curators Charles Esche and Hou Hanru invited twenty-six alternative spaces and artist collectives to assemble much of the main exhibition-hall display, and other curatorial projects were installed elsewhere in the city.[62]

This spreading of a biennial throughout its home city, often employing derelict or unconventional sites, was a common feature of this exhibition genre. Advanced artists and progressive curators had been using such spaces since the 1960s, and ambitious exhibitions—such as Kasper König's Sculpture Project Münster (held every ten years from 1977), Jan Hoet's "Chambres d'Amis" (Ghent, 1986), and Mary Jane Jacob's "Places with a Past" (Charleston, 1991) and "Culture in Action" (Chicago, 1993)—often expanded throughout cities or regions. But with the growth of biennials the multi-sited show became a standard form of exhibition-making. A classic case was the 2005 Istanbul Biennial, where curators Vasif Kortun and Charles Esche used a variety of local structures to integrate the exhibition into the city away from the more famous monuments and conventional sites of display. Like the expansion of biennials outside the art world centers, and for similar reasons of social and political inclusion, many biennials moved into marginal parts of their host cities. The knitting of biennials throughout urban and regional areas also connected with a rising interest in the relationship between the local and the global. This concern for the specificity of local conditions within the context of globalization, sometimes referred to as "the glocal," became a major theme of international biennials in the first decade of the new century.[63]

Hou Hanru's responsibility for important shows within the 1997 Johannesburg and the 2002 Gwangju biennials, and his curating the 2007 Istanbul Biennial, or Charles Esche's central role in the curating of Gwangju in 2002 and Istanbul in 2005, or Okwui Enwezor's directing the 1997 Johannesburg Biennial and then heading Documenta 11 in 2002 and Gwangju in 2008, are striking but not surprising facts concerning the biennials and the curators mentioned above. For with the boom in biennials came the emergence of a group of curators who were sought out repeatedly by biennial sponsors for their curatorial ideas and art world knowledge, management and promotional skills, and international notoriety.[64]

The thematic structure of many of the new biennials reinforced the exhibition-of-the-exhibition notion that Buren had complained about in 1972, as well as the focus on the single curator as central figure. But the complex organizational work involved in mounting these massive events, including coordinating the large installations and artist commissions that came to dominate biennials, necessitated more collaborative, team efforts. As we have seen, Szeemann pioneered this method at Documenta 5, but in the 1990s the distribution of curatorial responsibilities became a dominant organizational mode, structuring, for instance, the curating of the first Gwangju Biennial in 1995 and of Johannesburg in 1997. And across the world, curatorial teams and curatorial advisors became critical to the functioning of biennials. The apotheosis of the approach was the 2003 Venice Biennale, "Dreams and Conflict: The Dictatorship of the Viewer," in which Francesco Bonami delegated responsibility to different curators for separate exhibitions within the Biennale.[65] Bonami's rationale was theoretical as well as practical, for he saw the notion of a single curatorial viewpoint to be untenable in a time of fragmentation and increasing diversity. And at the turn of the twenty-first century, this postmodern stance of rejecting a grand narrative in favor of multiple visions, multiple stories, came to structure some of the most representative exhibitions of the time.

This process of distributive curating, often instantiating an ideological commitment to multiple perspectives, should be distinguished conceptually from another collaborative means of assembling an exhibition, collective curating. And the first decade of this century saw the proliferation of curatorial collectives, the most highly visible example being the 2009 Istanbul Biennial, "What Keeps Mankind Alive?," assembled by the four-woman Croatian group What, How & For Whom (WHW).[66] This exhibition presented a strong anti-capitalist stance, and historical precedents for collective curatorial work not surprisingly often have had a significant political dimension, as did the "Real Estate Show" mounted by the artist group Colab and the exhibitions of the artistic–curatorial collective Group Material. But there have been many less explicitly political examples, including the collective curatorial process adopted by Manifesta from its beginning in 1996. And it is not surprising that such collective activity has been growing in an age of curatorial training programs, which often involve group projects and naturally generate active networks.

The expansion of international biennials in the 1990s and 2000s achieved many of the goals sought by exhibition organizers,

from expanded cultural tourism and infrastructure development to curatorial experimentation and greater opportunities for artists from throughout the world. But it certainly was not without its critics. Harald Szeemann, active as a biennial curator in his later years, came to see globalization "as the great enemy of art."[67] And indeed globalism in the art world came to be viewed by some as a new kind of imperialism, reinforcing the power of the Euro-American centers through colonization of the periphery, with success coming only to the non-Western artists residing in these centers.[68] Related critiques focused on biennials as serving entrenched economic and political interests, supporting commercial concerns of the art and tourist industries, and sustaining those in power through facilitating local economic growth and increasing international prestige of host cities, regions, and nations. There also was much criticism relating to the content of these exhibitions, from debunking of purported innovation in modes of display to the kind of artworks encouraged and the kind of experiences provided, experiences exemplifying the triumph of spectacle over aesthetic contemplation.[69] And as the new century commenced art world insiders began to develop significant biennial fatigue, becoming tired of flying from city to city for exhibitions by the same curators seemingly selecting the same artists. For a while the biennial phenomenon seemed to weaken in the face of growing criticism and participant exhaustion, despite counterarguments as to their potential for destabilizing the hegemony of established museums and developing artistic capacity outside Western Europe and North America.[70] But by the end of the first decade of the new century, the international biennial circuit had become a mature, stable element of the ecology of the art world, with the growing system of commercial art fairs having largely replaced it as an object of criticism.

One feature of this latter decade of biennial activity was the wholesale development of the exhibition as a discursive form, as an expansive event involving much more than the viewing of artworks.[71] Exemplary, and generative, here was Documenta X in 1997, directed by Catherine David. Here, under the banner of "100 Days, 100 Guests," the daily presentations by a range of intellectuals were not viewed as supplementary to the works on display but were intended to be equally important parts of the whole. In 1970, Harald Szeemann had initially conceived of Documenta 5 as a one hundred-day event, but his frame of reference was the art of happenings and performance, and the incorporation of performative works in such exhibitions as "Contemporanea" in Rome in 1973 was seen as expanding the artistic content of the show. For David, however, artworks were assimilated to the activities of Documenta's other guests, with all the elements—art on display, talks, films, discussions, and readings—viewed as modes of enquiry, means of interrogating our most pressing political and personal concerns. Okwui Enwezor expanded this conception in the following Documenta, over the course of 2001–2 extending the temporal and spatial boundaries of the show beyond the physical exhibition in Kassel to include four additional "Platforms." At these events in Vienna and Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, and Lagos, select groups met for presentations and discussions of such topics as democracy, creolization, and social justice, with all five platforms, including the display in Germany, constituting a far-reaching investigation of the globalized postcolonial world and its discontents.[72] Here the notion of an exhibition was broadened from that of a circumscribed place of presentation to an extended process of research, analysis, and engagement with a wide range of contemporary issues.

This reconceiving of the exhibition as a discursive space rather than as a site of display soon became omnipresent in curatorial practice, and it coincided with the development of new ways of thinking about art institutions. With their programs grouped retrospectively under the heading of "New Institutionalism," places such as the Munich Kunstverein under the direction of Maria Lind in 2001–4, the Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art (Malmo, Sweden) in 2000–4 under Charles Esche, and the Palais de Tokyo (Paris) co-directed by Nicholas Bourriaud and Jerome Sans in 2002–6 began to treat exhibitions as just one among a range of expressions of institutional mission, standing alongside publications, discussions, and non-exhibitionary projects as alternative ways in which to engage issues of central concern to artists and audiences.[73] This rethinking of the institution also involved experimentation with exhibition formats, as with the Munich Kunstverein's 2002–3 survey of the work of Christine Borland, which presented one-by-one across an entire year pieces that ordinarily would have been shown simultaneously in a standard single-artist exhibition.[74]

New Institutionalism itself was related to a variety of artistic and curatorial practice exemplifying Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics." Bourriaud had first used the term in the catalog for his 1996 exhibition "Traffic," and it refers broadly to artistic activity aimed at creating social situations rather than physical works, situations to which participant responses are central. Whether in private or public settings, the primary intention is not to create objects but to elicit experiences and thoughts, and to prompt human interactions, all of which become part of the work's content. Here the notion of participation is crucial, linking this development of artistic and institutional practice to a tradition extending back for decades.[75] A noteworthy precedent is Joseph Beuys's contribution to Documenta 5, his "Office for Direct Democracy." For each of the one hundred days of the show, the artist talked with visitors about political, aesthetic, and environmental issues. In this Beuys prefigured a notion of the artwork and the exhibition being at root enquiry- and discussion-based, its content and significance dependent on the participation of an audience.[76]

A concern with exhibition-making was natural for the artists associated with relational aesthetics, as their work bridged the artwork–exhibition distinction in essentially depending on interpersonal engagement. One of them, Pierre Huyghe, is said to have spoken of an exhibition "not as a resolution, not as a happy ending of production, but as a point of departure."[77] And thinking of exhibition history since 1960, one can see developing notions of what an exhibition is to follow this trajectory from resolutions to moments

Catherine David curated the influential Documenta X in 1997. View of Peter Kogler's installation in the documenta-Halle.

Nari Ward's installation *Fortress* in curator Mary Jane Jacob's exhibition "Evoking History: Memory of Water and Memory of Land," Charleston, 2002. The exhibition followed and built upon Jacob's significant 1991 exhibition "Places with a Past."

of beginning. Here the movement is from "resolved" presentations of works assembled according to a particular idea or a given sensibility, such as "Primary Structures," through exhibitions as processes of an unforeseen final state, beginning with such shows as "When Attitudes Become Form" and extending to large international exhibitions involving many commissioned works and projects, to exhibitions viewed as initiating a course of events in the manner of relational aesthetics or as creating a discursive platform for experiment, enquiry, and analysis.

The discursive turn in exhibition practice was directed at a range of concerns, from politics and economics to cultural theory and aesthetics. And a natural subject was the international exhibitionary system itself. Just as earlier artists had attended to the frame of the art world in works of institutional critique, so curators began to assemble exhibitions and events that interrogated the system of which these occasions were a part.[78] The 10th Taipei Biennial in 2010 took international biennials as its theme, and the previous year the Bergen Kunstall in Norway mounted an ambitious international conference as a stand-in for a proposed biennial in Bergen.[79] But the most high-profile example of such self-reflexive practice was the 28th São Paulo Biennial in 2008, where curator Ivo Mesquita denied the public the expected presentation of artworks in favor of exhibiting the empty second floor of Oscar Niemeyer's dramatic pavilion, supplemented by a program of events and a display of the archive of the biennial itself. Another biennial without art presented a very different version of self-reflexive practice, this one well laced with irony—the 6th Caribbean Biennial in the fall of 1999, organized by artist Maurizio Cattelan and curator Jens Hoffman on the West Indies island of St. Kitts.[80] After they had promoted the event internationally, obtained sponsorship, and invited a group of artists often included in major biennials to the island, their event actually consisted of the artists spending a week together on vacation. Of course, there had been no Caribbean Biennials 1 through 5.

The embrace of discursivity was related to another attempt to transform the traditional exhibition format in the first decade of the new century, a move to exhibition-as-pedagogy.[81] Educational components, of course, had been an essential feature of exhibition and institutional practice for many years, and lectures and panel discussions now accompany virtually every art world event. Within large international exhibitions explicitly pedagogical activity had assumed various forms, from the innovative education gallery of Documenta 5 to the educational programming arranged for local communities by artist and critic Luis Camnitzer for the 6th Mercosul Biennial in 2007. But exhibitionary discursivity sought to take a wholly pedagogical form at Manifesta 6, planned for 2006 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Here the organizers proposed to overturn the standard exhibition model by creating a trans-disciplinary art school instead of a place of display. But Manifesta 6 was canceled before it began, having fallen afoul of the contentious Cypriot political situation by insisting that this school operate in both the Turkish and the Greek

sections of the city. (Anton Vidokle, one of the Manifesta 6 co-curators, took the idea of exhibition-as-a-school on the road, first creating a year-long series of educational events called "Unitednationsplaza" in East Berlin, and then organizing a monthly seminar program entitled "Night School" in conjunction with New York's New Museum.)[82]

Despite the turn to the discursive, and to alternatives to the standard presentational format, traditional exhibition practices have remained vital to biennials, with artworks selected by individuals in both thematic and chronological groupings. In addition to the expansion of contemporary art exhibitions giving more opportunities to professional curators, many working independently of institutions, artists have also engaged in significant curatorial efforts. One noteworthy case is Mike Kelley's exhibition "The Uncanny," assembled first as an element of the sculpture exhibition "Sonsbeek 93," restaged in 2004 by Tate Liverpool, and partially reconstructed at the 2010 Gwangju Biennial. Commercial galleries also took advantage of the curatorial interests of well-known artists, providing resources for ambitious shows such as "Who's Afraid of Jasper Johns?" at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, in the summer of 2008. Here, artist Urs Fisher and the dealer Gavin Brown mounted an idiosyncratic show in which works were installed on a complete photo reproduction of the gallery's previous exhibition. But the artist-curated show receiving the most attention was Jeff Koons's "Skin Fruit," a 2010 exhibition at New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art selected from the collection of Dakis Jannou, a trustee of the New Museum and a major collector of works by Koons. A controversial exhibition that raised ethical questions concerning the relationship between the commercial and the non-commercial sectors of the art world, "Skin Fruit" might be seen as the ugly twin of the 2008 São Paulo Biennial. For "Skin Fruit" was enmeshed in the international art system, pointing to its excesses and fundamental moral dilemmas, while the São Paulo show essentially was mounted as a protest against what that system had become.

We have seen how this world developed in the second half of the twentieth century, with exhibitionary structures evolving hand in hand with the growth of the market for contemporary art. Expanding commercial venues and increasing involvement of museums with the collecting and display of recent art led to the most important shows being assembled by professional exhibition organizers rather than by artists, as had been the case with central exhibitions of earlier avant-gardes. And the ranks of those involved in organizing such exhibitions extended beyond museums and galleries to include individuals working independently of institutions. Independent curators focused their efforts on thematic exhibitions, presenting contemporary works in terms of conceptual structures of their own devising, sometimes in sync with and sometimes departing from the thematics of the artists. The apotheosis of the thematic exhibition, and of the dominion of independent curating, came with the growth of international biennials. Grounded in global economic and geopolitical change, biennials became an increasingly important part of the international system of artistic production and distribution. And out of this situation came new exhibitionary forms that expanded the notion of what an exhibition can be.

The exhibitions documented here play various roles within this general narrative, and they are important in different ways. Some are noteworthy for introducing major artists and artworks, others for their curatorial innovation, and some for being key points of intersection of significant social, political, and cultural histories.[83] Of course these categories of significance are not mutually exclusive. For exhibitions function across multiple dimensions, linking individuals and objects that play diverse roles within different networks of causation and meaning. There are many narratives to be constructed out of the stories that interweave in and across these exhibitions, accounts that will change as the interests of artists, curators, critics, and historians develop. But at the center remains the phenomenon of exhibitions, where artworks and new ways of thinking and seeing meet the public.

The 50th Venice Biennale, 2003, was organized by Artistic Director Francesco Bonami under the theme "Dreams and Conflicts—The Dictatorship of the Viewer," as an "exhibition of exhibitions," with ten presentations by eleven curators. "Utopia Station" was curated by Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Rirkrit Tiravanija. Shown here is Ingmar Dragset and Michael Elmgreen's *Spelling Utopia*, with Superflex's *Guarana Power* in the background.

01

EXHIBITION

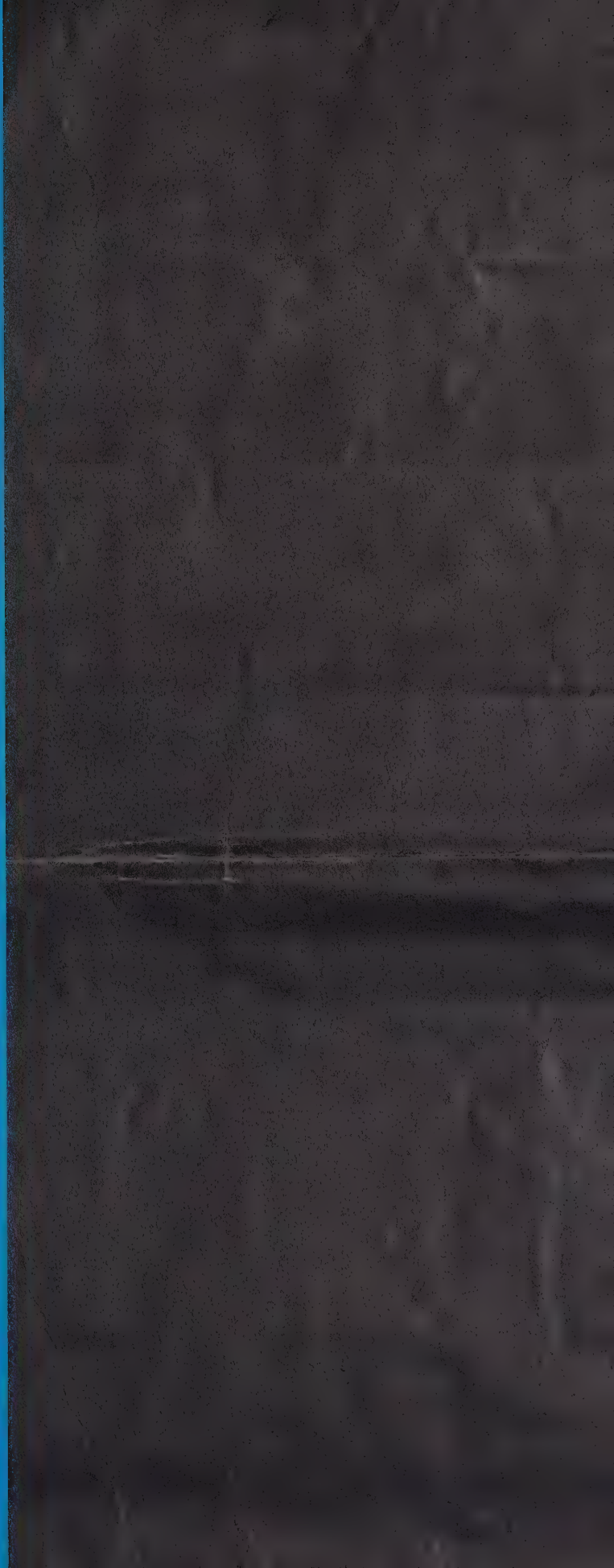
Dylaby

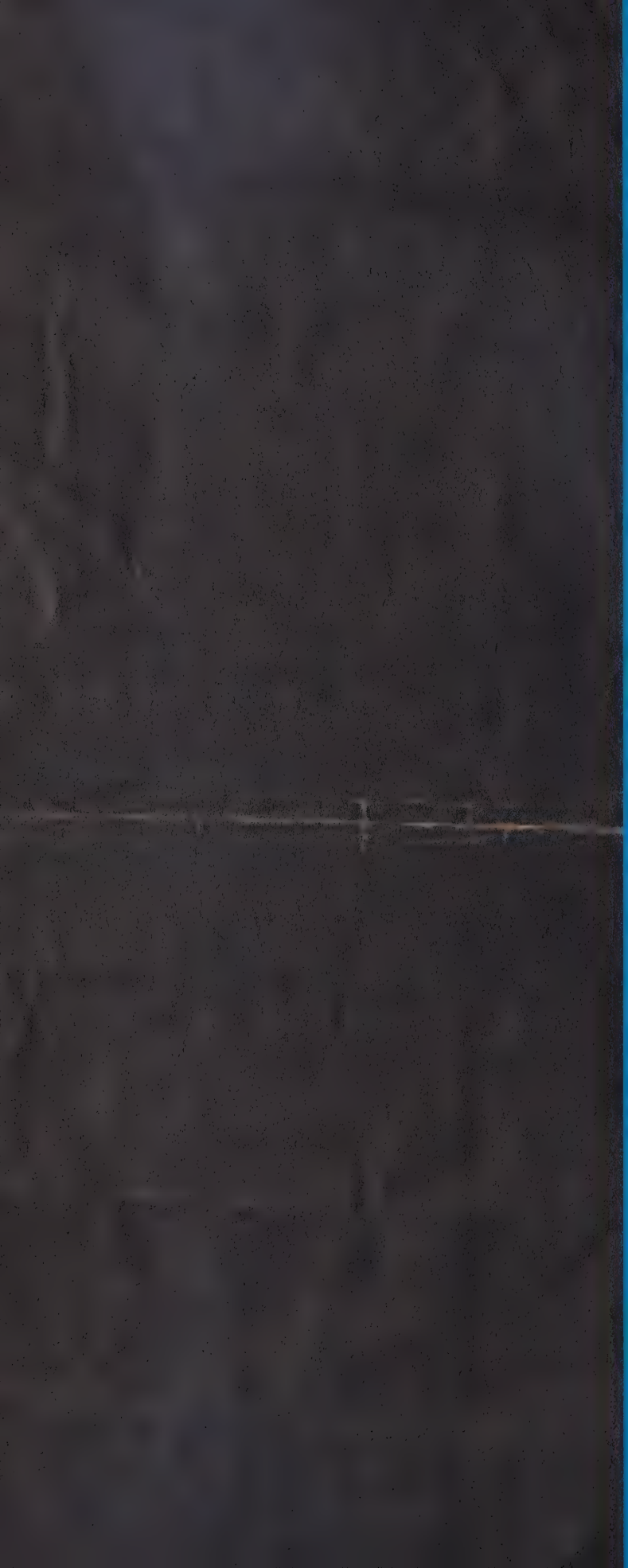
LOCATION

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

DATE

30 August–
30 September
1962





CURATOR
Willem Sandberg with Ad Petersen

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Robert Rauschenberg, Martial Raysse, Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, Per Olof Ultvedt

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Dylaby. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1962. Includes artist biographies, map of the exhibition, texts by Willem Sandberg, diary by Ad Petersen, and photographs by Ed van der Elsken.

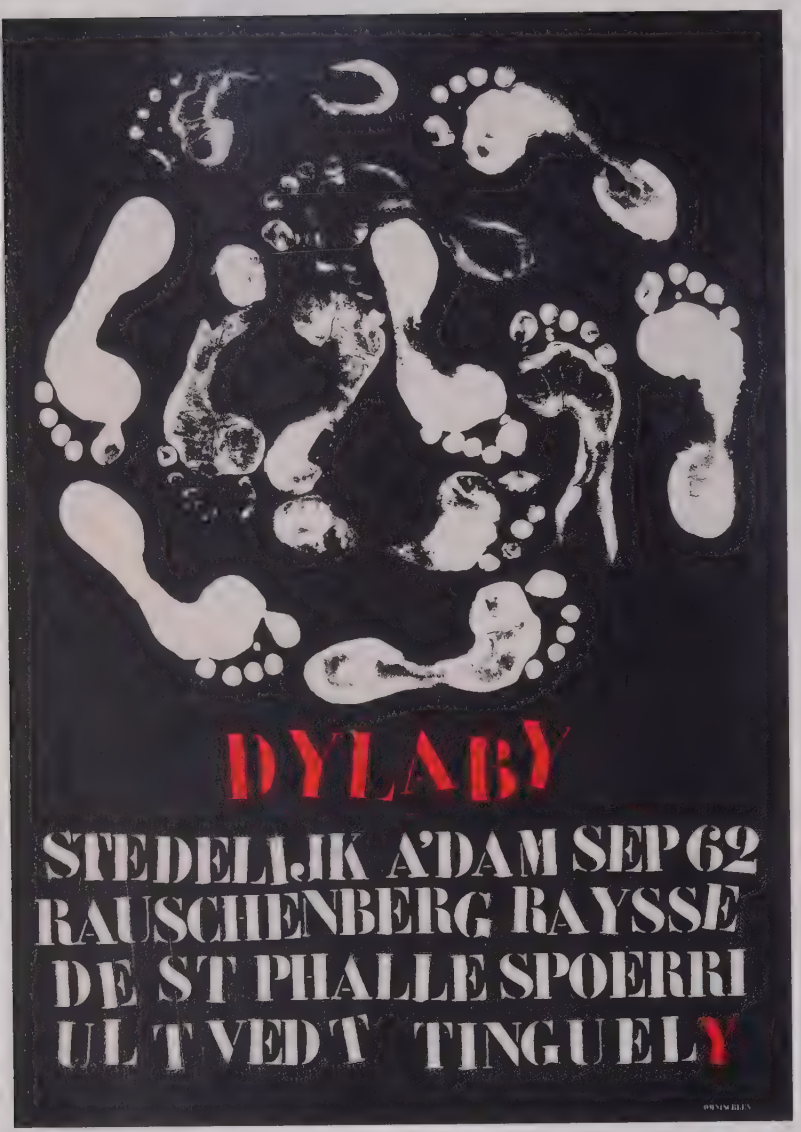
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 6
Number of works: 9
Total attendance: unknown

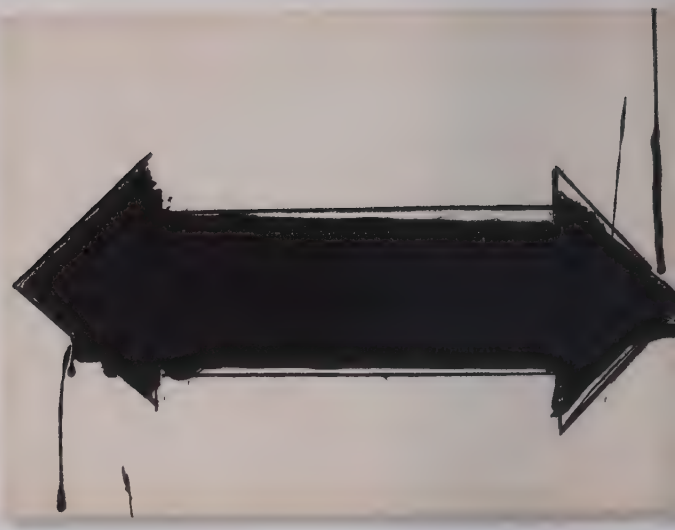
"Dylaby" ("Dynamic Labyrinth") was set in a major museum known for its support of contemporary art and artists, and it thus exemplifies the increasing influence of art institutions over artistic activity. But it was also an artists' intervention, a project that disrupted both the physical and mental space of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum with a meandering path of participatory installations. In part the exhibition looked back to Surrealist display, as in the disorientation of Daniel Spoerri's gallery turned on its side. Yet with Niki de Saint Phalle's shooting arcade and Martial Raysse's beach, "Dylaby" anticipated such playful presentations of our own time as those associated with Relational Aesthetics. In essentially giving the exhibition over to the artists, in his last Stedelijk show the innovative museum director and curator Willem Sandberg expressed his fervent belief in the experimental nature of exhibitions, and in the museum as a progenitor of experimentation.

"Dylaby" was built on ground laid by the 1961 kinetic art exhibition "Bewogen Beweging," ("Moved Movement"), a collaboration between Sandberg, Pontus Hulten (director of Stockholm's Moderna Museet), and the artists Jean Tinguely and Daniel Spoerri. Tinguely had already proposed a huge labyrinthine structure to be built by artists for a Swiss national exposition, and after the success of his work in "Bewogen Beweging" Sandberg invited him to organize a show employing this concept in reduced form. After many artists were considered, the list was pared down to seven, which dropped to six after Jim Dine changed his mind. This left Robert Rauschenberg as the only American, an outsider who spoke no French—the language of conversation of the others—and who worked by himself all night. While the Europeans made their environments, Rauschenberg created a group of exhibitable constructions that would be some of the few pieces remaining from the show.

Sandberg delegated to his colleague Ad Petersen the role of working with the artists to develop their plans. Looking forward to the kind of artist commissions that have become so common, the show mobilized the museum staff in a collaborative effort that made participation essential to its preparation as well as to its engagement with the audience. For materials, the artists retrieved items from the flea market, junk stores, and other shopping venues, and even the zoo. And after three weeks of frenetic work, the show opened to the public. Viewers had to choose to enter by either of two doors. One of them led into a darkened room by Spoerri that had to be negotiated by touch, and the other to a climb-through structure by Per Olof Ultvedt. The odyssey would end in Tinguely's narrow room of balloons blowing around and printed with the show's title.

Yet the background to "Dylaby" pre-dates Sandberg's interest in the work of Tinguely, going back to 1959 with a plan by the Dutch section of the radical Situationist International for an ambitious labyrinth to be built within the Stedelijk. Requiring an elaborate construction that included sound and weather installations, the project also involved three days of movement through the city in a Situationist dérive. While the proposal seems to have been accepted by Sandberg, the Situationist International refused to allow the museum and city authorities to set conditions on their work, and they pulled out of the project. That "Dylaby" was realized might be seen as a reconciliation between the claims of the institution and those of advanced art. But this earlier encounter between the museum and the Situationist demand for total freedom points to a tension that would grow in the future, as institutional players came increasingly to determine exhibitionary form and content.





	rauschenberg	rayssе	spoerri	ultvedt	niki	tinguely
9/8	komt 's morgens per vliegtuig uit new york. kwandelt rond in de stad en koopt twee pullovers.	arriveert op half twee per vliegtuig uit nice.	al sinds zondag met auto in de stad – om kirchka aan te treffen te laten zien.	komt per trein uit stockholm, treft in het museum poitier hulten.	komt 's morgens samen met tinguely per auto uit brunet aan.	
20	bespreking met sandberg over de vorm die dylaby moet krijgen. niki zegt een schuttent met bewegende zakjes vent te willen maken, ultvedt een bouwsel vol deuren en trappen, met bewegende meubelen. spoerri wil een donker labyrint in elkaar zetten waar men op de tast doorheen moet – ook wil hij ergens een keuken maken waar de bezoker een ei op zoets kan bakken. rayssе wil om een zwembad hiin elu chique cote d'azur sfeer scheppen, gheel in plastic. tinguely zegt dat hij hier en daar, waar het zo uitkomt een op andere machine zal maken. rauschenberg heeft nog geen enkel idee maar belooft terstond te zullen gaan nadenken. na de bespreking zondgang door de kelders van het museum om het aanwezige materiaal in ogenschouw te nemen – want niemand heeft ook maar iets meegenomen, alles moet ter plaatse in elkaar gezet worden. verdere discussies over de verdeling van de zalen en de grootte van de beschikbare ruimte.					
		gaat naar het water-loopkein en komt met drie zwembroeken terug.	gaat naar het waterloopkein.		gaat naar het waterioopkein en koopt daar drie verfkwasten.	is vervolgt het water-loopkein terug te zien en koopt er een tentamtel.
	's avonds gezamenlijk eten met sqeelberg, bij de chinees, waarna bezoek aan het waaggebouw om david en goliath te bekijken. vooral niki zeer onder de indruk.					
9/8		wil een bad nemen	begint met rayssе een campagne om de prijzen op het water-loopkein te drukken.	koopt op het water-loopkein een fiets, om zich vlugger te kunnen verplaatsen.	bezoekt met tinguelly artis begint aan een reliefmet een kathedraal.	tachtische bespreking met schippers.
	alle mogelijke materiaal, vooral hout, wordt uit de kelders van het museum naar de zalen gebracht					
10/8		blaast een ballon op uit een plastic zwembad kopen en doet dat 's middags.	's morgens op het plein werkt 's middags aan de donkere ruimte, drinkt 's avonds met rauschenberg veel jenever.	werkt hard aan zijn deuren – een labyrint en verzwaart vrijwel als het beschikbare hout.	koopt allerlei objecten en werkt verder aan de kathedraal. besluit om er geen trucjeskes in te verwerken.	zoekt rauschenberg
11/8		wil een bad nemen.	houten hoofd. koopt met rayssе op het veel rabouplein ongeveer dertig poppen voor niki en tinguely oude reddingsgordels, om in de donkere zaal op te lopen, hier en daar	werkt als een beesteen. wordt door tinguely geholpen.	begint 's ochtends vroeg en werkt de hele dag door om zo veel mogelijk uit te geven maar 's avonds zit ze een filmpje van laurel & hardy die naar nieuwe meubelen gaat.	helpt ultvedt.
12/8	denkt weer op en begint onmiddellijk te werken aan een soort sculpteur met een stuk plank als middelpunt.	blaast voortdurend dezelfde ballonnen op. eet tiveel.	verwerkt de zwarte ruimte. bevestigt een lamp met een hoepels op steele water en maakt een lichtje onder in een closetpot. chauffeur van rauschenberg.	cels een ja zucht aan het tuinmeubel. heeft moeilijkheden met het vinden van nog meer hout. geholpen door luitzen.	de kathedraal bijna klaar. begint nu aan de poppen-zaal.	helpt ultvedt en niki.
	breekt van terug van vakantie, waardoor de hond's situatie op het museum ineens duidelijk wordt					
13/8	gaat naar het water-loopkein en naar nijkerk, die alle schroot gratis ter beschikking stelt. komt terug met de resten van een half vliegtuig. begint nu pas echt te werken.	schrijft de hele dag brieven, op het terras, in de zon. 's middags vraagt petersen waarom hij niet werkt.	ontdekt het met-apparaat van niki wat het werk erg vergemakkelijkt. bevestigt onmiddellijk een geitenvel en wat repen schuim-plastic.	maakt zijn eerste bewegende la. krijgt meer hout. vagn stees, uit clevemarken, komt hem helpen.	werkt aan de rakat ontdekt dat het gips waar ze mee gewerkt heeft niet goed droogt. boos.	moeilijkheden met de autoriteiten van het museum over het krijgen van nog meer materiaal. neemt rauschenberg en ultvedt mee naar nijkerk. wil een mechanaal bont-ballet maken.
14/8	zommelt 's nachts in zijn zaal.	heeft de pest in. maakt om vijf uur 's middags een meesterwerk.	breegt hier en daar verborgen verlichting aan in het donkere labyrint.	werkt flink door.	vindt goed gips	begint aan de machine onder de vloer, bij de shell-cent.
15/8	neemt een bad.	wordt veel zijn leven zo theatrisch gewerkt. laat het idee vallen om naar het zwem-bad te gaan.	werkt aan het hier en daar ongelijk maken van de vloeren. wordt geholpen door de candeo's zolein page die tijdens de verdere voorbereiding voort-durend iedereen helpt.	maakt een hele serie deuren.	maakt een zon en een maan. begint van haar charme gebruik te maken om anderen voor zich te laten werken.	vernietigt een zwarte radio. maakt de bewegende zebrastraats in spoerri's labyrint.

↑ The screen print poster for "Dylaby" was designed by Piet van der Have and Martial Raysse, with the collaboration of the Stedelijk's curator, Ad Petersen.

↗ Front cover of the *Dylaby* catalog, with double-end arrows designed by Robert Rauschenburg.

→ Fold-out page from the *Dylaby* catalog, with a reproduction of the diary kept by Ad Petersen detailing the installation of the show.

DYLABY

I daniel spoerri
1 zoemer
2 fietswiel
3 schuimrubber vloer
4 draaibare zuilen
5 schuine vloer
6 fietsbanden
7 marmer
8 blitzlicht
9 oude kleren
10 bed
11 kippengaas
12 schuine vloer
13 rolschaats (tinguely)
14 fietswiel
15 paspop
16 brandweerhelm
17 draaischijf
18 rubberdraden
19 beweegbare wand
20 "tableau piège"
21 warm paneel
22 natte spons
23 closetpot
24 hagedis op sterk water
25 rood licht
26 ketting
27 vochtige wand
28 groene lamp
29 nooddeur
30 microfoon
31 matras

II per olof ultvedt
A gedesynchroniseerde radio (tinguely)
1 ingang
2 buffet
3 stoel
4 hobbelpaard
5 gebroken stoel
6 contra gewicht (rieten been)
7 deur met kippengaas
8 cyther
9 fietswiel
10 dienblad met aluminium servies
11 aluminium pan
12 ruimte met contra gewichten
13 mangel
14 fauteuilrug
15 gong
16 niet gebruikte meubelen
17 uitgang

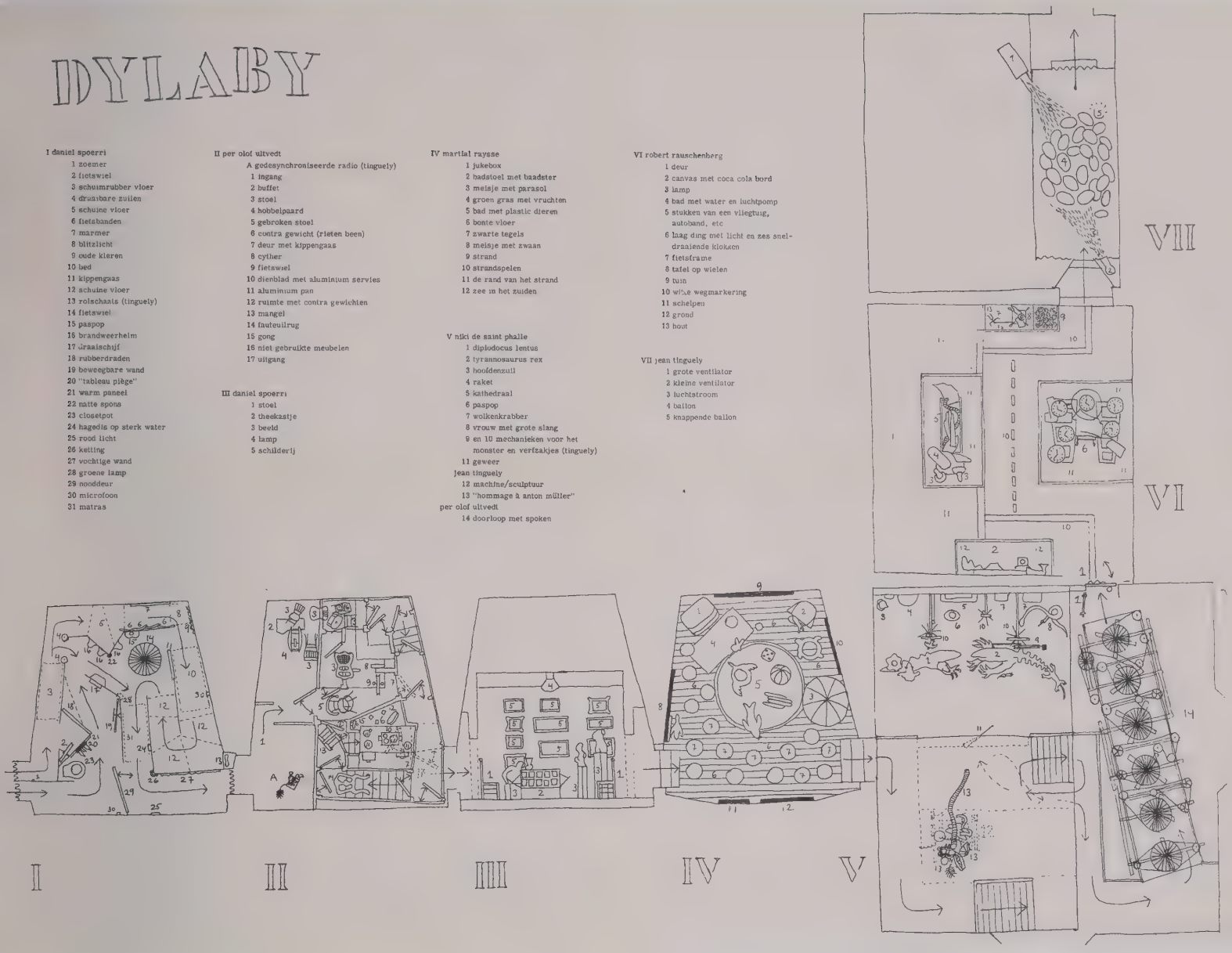
III daniel spoerri
1 stoel
2 theekastje
3 beeld
4 lamp
5 schilderij

IV martial raysse
1 jukebox
2 badstoel met baadster
3 meisje met parasol
4 groen gras met vruchten
5 bad met plastic dieren
6 bonte vloer
7 zwarte tegels
8 meisje met zwaan
9 strand
10 strandspelen
11 de rand van het strand
12 zee in het zuiden

V niki de saint phalle
1 diplodocus lentus
2 tyrannosaurus rex
3 hoofdenzuil
4 raket
5 kathedraal
6 paspop
7 wolkenkrabber
8 vrouw met grote slang
9 en 10 mechanieken voor het monster en verfzakjes (tinguely)
11 geweer
jean tinguely
12 machine/sculptuur
13 "hommage à anton müller"
per olof ultvedt
14 doorloop met spoken

VI robert rauschenberg
1 deur
2 canvas met coca cola bord
3 lamp
4 bad met water en luchtpomp
5 stukken van een vliegtuig, autoband, etc
6 laag ding met licht en zes snel-draaiende klokken
7 fietsframe
8 tafel op wielen
9 tuin
10 witte wegmarkering
11 schelpen
12 grond
13 hout

VII jean tinguely
1 grote ventilator
2 kleine ventilator
3 luchtstroom
4 ballon
5 knappende ballon



↑ Fold-out page from the *Dylaby* catalog, with the map of the exhibition drawn by Per Olof Ultvedt, which shows the order of the rooms in the "dynamic labyrinth" as well as outlines of the individual works.

↓ Daniel Spoerri, Robert Rauschenberg, and Niki de Saint Phalle dancing in Martial Raysse's playground-like *Raysse Beach* environment, the fourth room in the exhibition, which featured a jukebox, paddling pool, and sunshade.

← Viewers entering "Dylaby" through Daniel Spoerri's darkened chamber (room 1).

↓ Room 3 of "Dylaby," Daniel Spoerri's second installation. The furnishings in the room have been turned at a 90-degree angle. In the image, the two women to the right are, in fact, lying on the floor. The image was printed in the exhibition catalog at this rotation.

→ Martial Raysse's installation in "Dylaby" (room 4), with the neon sign just visible spelling "Raysse Beach."

↘ Martial Raysse's *Raysse Beach* installation (room 4).

Kaysse beach

↑ Room 5 featured installations by Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt. Shown here are Jean Tinguely's works *Machine/Sculpture* and *Hommage to Anton Müller*.

↗↗ Niki de Saint Phalle aims a rifle at her installation *Shooting Gallery* in room 5. To the left of her stands Willem Sandberg, the director of the Stedelijk.

↗ Room 5, showing Niki de Saint Phalle's *Shooting Gallery*, a sculptural installation of prehistoric monsters, above which were hung bags of colored paint. Visitors were invited to shoot at these bags in order to explode them and thereby color-in the sculpture below.

→ Detail of Niki de Saint Phalle's installation in room 5, showing splashes of paint from the bags shot at by participants in the "shooting gallery."

→ Room 6 featured Robert Rauschenberg's sculptural assemblages, placed in large cages, and a "road" running down the center of the room.

↓ Room 5 featured installations by Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt. This image shows Ultvedt's raised platform, through which visitors could walk.

↘ Room 7, the last room in the exhibition, was filled with balloons with the word "Dylaby" printed on them. The floor was sloped at an angle, and fans kept the balloons in motion. Because the balloons frequently burst, a member of staff was on hand to inflate new ones. In a letter to Ad Peterson, Jean Tinguely suggests the floor should have been planed or sanded to prevent so many balloons from bursting.

THE WORLD AS A LABYRINTH

Internationale Situationniste #4
January 1960

In 1959, the Situationists joined forces with the Stedilijk Museum in Amsterdam to organize a general exhibition, both drawing on the museum site itself and going beyond its framework. This entailed transforming rooms 36 and 37 into a labyrinth, at the same time as three days of systematic dérive were to be undertaken by three Situationist teams operating simultaneously in the central area of the Amsterdam conurbation. A more conventional supplement to these basic activities was to consist of an exhibition of certain documents, along with permanent taped lectures, relayed continuously and only changed at the end of every twenty-four hours. The execution of this plan, finally decided on 30 May 1960, called for the reinforcement of the Dutch Situationists by a dozen of their foreign comrades.

On 5 March the director of the Stedelijk Museum, W. J. H. B. Sandberg, approved the definitive plan while revealing two sudden reservations: 1.) the Amsterdam Fire Brigade would be called in to give their approval of certain potentially dangerous aspects of the labyrinth; 2.) part of the resources necessary for the construction would not be supplied by the museum but by external organizations—notably a "Prince Bernhard Foundation"—to whom the S.I. would have to make direct appeal. Beyond the comic aspect of the first and the air of compromise of the second, the same obstacle could be glimpsed: because the management of the Stedelijk Museum would be adopting a partly irresponsible attitude, third parties would be given the responsibility to judge, without appeal, the necessary characteristics of any given detail of our construction. And this precisely at a time when the nature of the undertaking called for the accumulation of many unusual processes to make a leap ahead in a new type of exhibition. In addition, because the work had to begin in situ, and because restrictions would perhaps have to be introduced at any moment in its elaboration, to proceed under these conditions would have meant underwriting the falsification of our project in advance.

At a Situationist meeting held the same day in Amsterdam, which turned out to be indecisive, Asger Jorn, himself party to the refusal to cooperate, succinctly set out the overall conditions:

> *Sandberg precisely represented that cultural reformism that, linked to politics, has come to power everywhere in Europe since 1945. These people have been the ideal managers of culture within the existing framework. To this end they have favored, to the hilt, minor modernists and the enfeebled young followers of the modernism of 1920–1930. They have been able to do nothing for true innovators. Currently, threatened on all sides by a counter-offensive of avowed reactionaries (see, since then, the attacks of the Belgian Senate on 10 May on official support for "abstract" painting), they were trying to radicalize themselves at the precise moment they were caving in. Sandberg, for example, had been violently attacked, two days before, in the Amsterdam municipal council by Christians who want to bring back figurative art (cf. the Algemeen Handelsblad of 4 March). His succession to the Stedelijk Museum could be considered an open question.*

Jorn considered, however, that he had had the possibility of choosing which side he wanted to be on:

> *Sandberg in the labyrinth, along with us, would have been able to find himself or to lose himself. But the ineffectual search for compromises to safeguard his past efforts prevented him from falling in with good company. Sandberg dared not break with the avant-garde, but neither dared he assure the conditions that were the only ones acceptable to a real avant-garde.*

At the end of Jorn's report, the meeting ended unanimously with the S.I.'s refusal to be involved, a refusal transmitted in writing on 7 March. It permitted only those of its members who thought it useful to profit individually from Sandberg's goodwill—as Pinot-Gallizio did in an exhibition of his industrial painting at the Stedelijk Museum in June, already shown in Paris last year.

The labyrinth, whose plan had been established by the Dutch section of the S.I., assisted on some points by Debord, Jorn, Wyckaert, and Zimmer, presents itself as a circuit that can vary, theoretically, from 650 feet to 1 3/4 miles (200 meters to 3 kilometers). The ceiling, sometimes 16 feet (5 meters) high, sometimes 8 feet (2.44 meters) high, may drop in certain places to 4 feet (1.22 meters) up. Its fitting-out involves neither interior decoration of some kind nor a reduced reproduction of urban ambience, but tends to form a mixed environment, never seen before, through the mélange of interior characteristics (furnished apartment) and exterior (urban) ones. To do this, it brings into play artificial rain and fog, and wind. Passage through the adapted thermal and luminous zones, the sound interventions (noises and speech controlled by a battery of tape recorders), and a certain number of conceptual and other provocations, is determined by a system of unilateral doors (visible or openable from only one side) as well as by the greater or lesser attractiveness of individual locations; this ends up increasing the occasions for getting lost. Among the obstacles we may cite Gallizio's tunnel of industrial painting and Wyckaert's detourned hoardings.

The operational dérive around Amsterdam must be related to the micro-dérive organized in this concentrated labyrinth. Two groups, each containing three Situationists, would dérive for three days, on foot or eventually by boat (sleeping in hotels along the way), without leaving the center of Amsterdam. These groups would remain in contact with each other, if possible, by means of the walkie-talkies with which they would be equipped. They would also be in contact with the cartographic team's radio truck, from where the director of the dérive—in this case Constant—would define their routes and sometimes give instructions. It was also the director of the dérive's responsibility to prepare experiments at certain locations and secretly arranged events.

If it was accompanied by the surveys of the terrain to be interpreted later during the workings of unitary urbanism, and if it was to have a certain theatrical aspect

through its effect on the public, this dérive operation was fundamentally intended to actualize a new game. And the S.I. had had to go against economic custom in writing into the exhibition's budget a salary of 50 florins per day of dérive.

Only the conjunction of these two operations is capable of revealing their new nature. The S.I., then, did not consider that the dérive on its own, which could have been maintained in Amsterdam, would have been sufficiently meaningful. Likewise, it is not desirable to build the labyrinth in the museum of a certain German town that is unsuitable to the dérive. Furthermore, the very fact of utilizing a museum brings with it a particular pressure, and the west face of the Amsterdam labyrinth was a wall specially constructed in the guise of an entrance to breach this: that hole in the wall had been requested by our German section as a guarantee of non-submission to the logic of the museum. The S.I. has also adopted, in April, a plan by Wyckaert profoundly modifying the use of the labyrinth studied for Amsterdam. The labyrinth shall not be built inside another building but, with greater flexibility and in direct relation to urban realities, on well-situated wasteland in a selected city, so as to become the starting point for dérives.

LETTER #1

UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE STEDELIJK MUSEUM ARCHIVE

Jim Dine to Willem Sandberg

12 June 1962

Dear Mr. Sandberg,
I am sorry but I will be unable to participate in "Dylaby." Since talking with Tinguely and tentatively agreeing, I have become involved in making a series of objects and am preparing for several shows next year, so my interest in this show is not what it should be and I would feel rather cynical about participating under these circumstances.

Thank you for your interest in me and once again, my apologies.

Best wishes,
Jim Dine

LETTER #2

Daniel Spoerri to Willem Sandberg

12 June 1962

Dear Mr. Sandberg,
Thank you for inviting me officially to "Dylaby." [...] As concerns my participation, I must immediately draw your attention to a particular circumstance. I would like to transform the space that I am given for my work into something like a house of mirrors. It will have various objects glued to it that are reflected in the mirrors facing them. The mirrors will not be arranged symmetrically, but randomly and chaotically so as to achieve a total distortion and fragmentation of the people in it. I am writing this to you now because I know from my experiments that mirrors are very expensive. Would it be possible to contact a mirror manufacturer who would graciously supply me with waste glass, but also larger pieces, or ideally even genuine mirror material. Personally I do not object to his name featuring on the mirror, which he could consider as an advertisement. Or he could be mentioned in the catalogue as a generous donor—only if you agree, of course.

I would also be glad to have at my disposal a certain sum for material expenses, which would allow me to buy old objects from the Jodenmarkt [flea market in Amsterdam].

These are my personal concerns regarding "Dylaby."

Best greetings and thank you,
Yours,
Daniel Spoerri

LETTER #3

Jean Tinguely to Willem Sandberg

26 June 1962

Dear Mr. Sandberg,
Jim Dine cannot come to A'dam → I have asked John Cage to come—that would be very good. Do you think so too?

See you soon,
Jean Tinguely

LETTER #4

Jean Tinguely to Willem Sandberg

Undated

Dear Mr. Sandberg,
I understand that the museum cannot spend too much on invisible costs: John Cage has not answered anyway—if he does, I will explain to him that I made a mistake.

Kind regards,
Tinguely

PUBLIC IS CO-CREATOR OF DYLABY AT THE STEDELIJK MUSEUM

Gerrit Kouwenaar

Vrije Volk, 8 September 1962

After "Bewogen Beweging" and "Zero," the Stedelijk Museum has now opened its hallowed halls to "Dylaby"—the dynamic labyrinth—a cross between a sunny kitchen, a haunted house, scaffolding, Grandma's attic, a ruin, and a sublimated birth trauma, which somehow forms a unit where people can grumpily or cheerfully lose their way. It is indeed a maze.

We have already been able to read what half a dozen foreign artists (the American Rauschenberg, the Frenchman Raysse, the Franco-American Niki de Saint Phalle, Tinguely and Spoerri from Switzerland, and the Swede Ultvedt) are offering museum visitors. Spoerri's pitch-black opening sector, with its fur, rags, foam plastic, and uneven floors, in which the art lover, fumbling both literally and figuratively towards the light, is instantly reduced to a clumsy oaf, has been particularly instrumental in provoking critics to put pen to paper.

The same is true of Ultvedt's stairs and doors construction and Niki de Saint Phalle's shooting gallery, where visitors can use air guns, free of charge, to shoot at little bags of paint and add colors to a whitewashed relief of diverse objects, including whale boats and an iguana—an opportunity people are seizing with a pleasing lack of embarrassment, as if Freud had never talked about symbols.

And of course there are no end of misunderstandings about this event, where guilt and innocence go hand in hand with a minimum of frustration. People who are not ashamed to enjoy simple fairground entertainments suddenly prove unable to join in. One can hear them explain loftily that a museum is there to experience works of art in passive contemplation, and its tone may not be lowered to that of an amusement park—a pronouncement made with such certainty one might assume it is a law of nature, a quotation from the Heidelberg Catechism.

INTENT

Others—with deadly seriousness or resignation—let the whirligig roll over them, seeking as they are the "deeper meaning" and the "artistic function" of the friendly madhouse they've ended up in. To my mind, though, the noisy, but open-minded rowdies who wandered in solely for the fun and the sensation are the ideal visitors. They get involved in the party without asking themselves whether all this is actually allowed, whether any eternal values are being trampled on, and whether this sort of thing is actually art.

For if one wants to attribute some kind of intent to the organizers, it is this: above all they seek to get the public to participate in the making process, in the creativity. They believe it is time to rid ourselves once and for all of the lethargic ingestion of a piece of congealed creativity, with the dictatorship of the balanced result from which nothing can be removed and to which nothing can be added.

They say that they drop you in the middle of things, the middle of the material, the middle of the creative process, the complicated process that is a maze. You have to open doors yourself and see what's behind them. You have to experience for yourself, for a change, how you move between and react to things, to pieces of material that are arranged in a subtly different way from what we are used to. They couldn't care less whether the result is Art, or art, or something else.

NEW TYPE

In the introduction I referred to the "Dylaby" happening in the same breath as previous stunts like "Bewogen Beweging" and "Zero." One could also add to this recent trio the 1949 international Cobra exhibition as an opener—not because there were no differences between all these happenings or because they have (or had) exactly the same intentions, but because what we are talking about here is a new type of exhibition whose principal characteristic is that it is increasingly less like an exhibition in the accepted sense.

It was Cobra fifteen years ago that, through Constant, uttered the rallying cry, "the creative process is much more significant than what is created." And however much these happenings conflicted with one another in their direct intentions ("Zero" in particular can be seen more as a "house-trained" response to the "slovenly" Cobra vitality and its personal continuation by rag-and-bone men like Tinguely), it is nevertheless this slogan that should be used as the point of departure for this type of exhibition.

CO-CREATOR

This is undoubtedly happening most consistently, I am tempted to say most literally, in the dynamic labyrinth. There is essentially no question of an exhibition of separate creations and objects, which was still very much the case in "Bewogen Beweging," even if these elements did combine to form an overall whole.

"Dylaby" is one large dynamic thing, a chain reaction of poetic images materialized in three dimensions; not something to look at, but something to go into, to be a part of. In other words, the individual visitor, actually without realizing it, is pitchforked into becoming a creator, a co-creator.

And perhaps the most amazing thing is that the co-creator has much less opportunity than he does while passively viewing a displayed object to escape just by closing his eyes and shouting "trash!" It is simply not human nature to describe as garbage something that you see and help create yourself. One can, of course, become confused and angry, though, particularly if one realizes afterward that one has been led through peculiar caverns (and again this has to be taken literally and figuratively) by the irresistible means of the funfair, the children's playground, and the variety show, that you said "yes" before a suspicious mind could come up with objections.

CHEERFUL

All the same, in general, this maze is not really aggressive. In fact, everything is cheerful and human. The impractical ingenuity and the hidden deployment of symbols may well remind one of the Dadaist and Surrealist stunts of the 1920s and 1930s, but the big difference between this and what came before, I believe, is the human character of this contemporary happening, although it certainly does not lack its dramatic moments—like Rauschenberg's crazy *Carnal Clocks*.

Of course, the quintessential feature of an event like this is that it is a one of a kind. A repeat, even with different antics and surprises, would be impossible. (Or it would have to be a labyrinth that the more constructively minded group of the Situationist International movement, one of whose bosses is the former Cobra and New Babylon man Constant, has on its agenda, and the realization of which has unfortunately so far been denied us because of a disagreement with the management of the Stedelijk Museum.)

However, I think that people would be wrong to look on this type of anti-exhibition as a passing phenomenon. I would even go so far as to say that over the next few years we will encounter more and more of them, in addition to the "classic exhibition," which has no less of a rationale. And even if, for the time being, people only see it as a laborious tool for changing the passive viewer into an active co-creator, I'm still all for it.

02

EXHIBITION

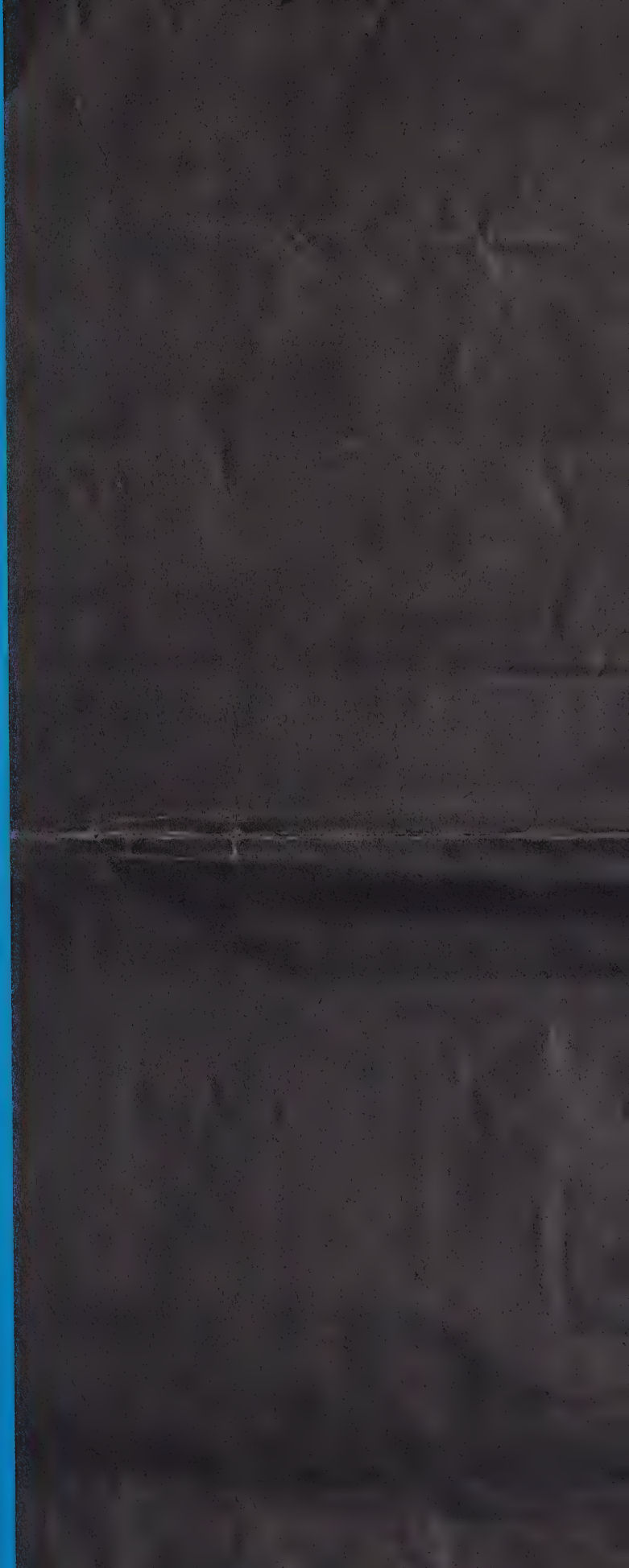
New Realists

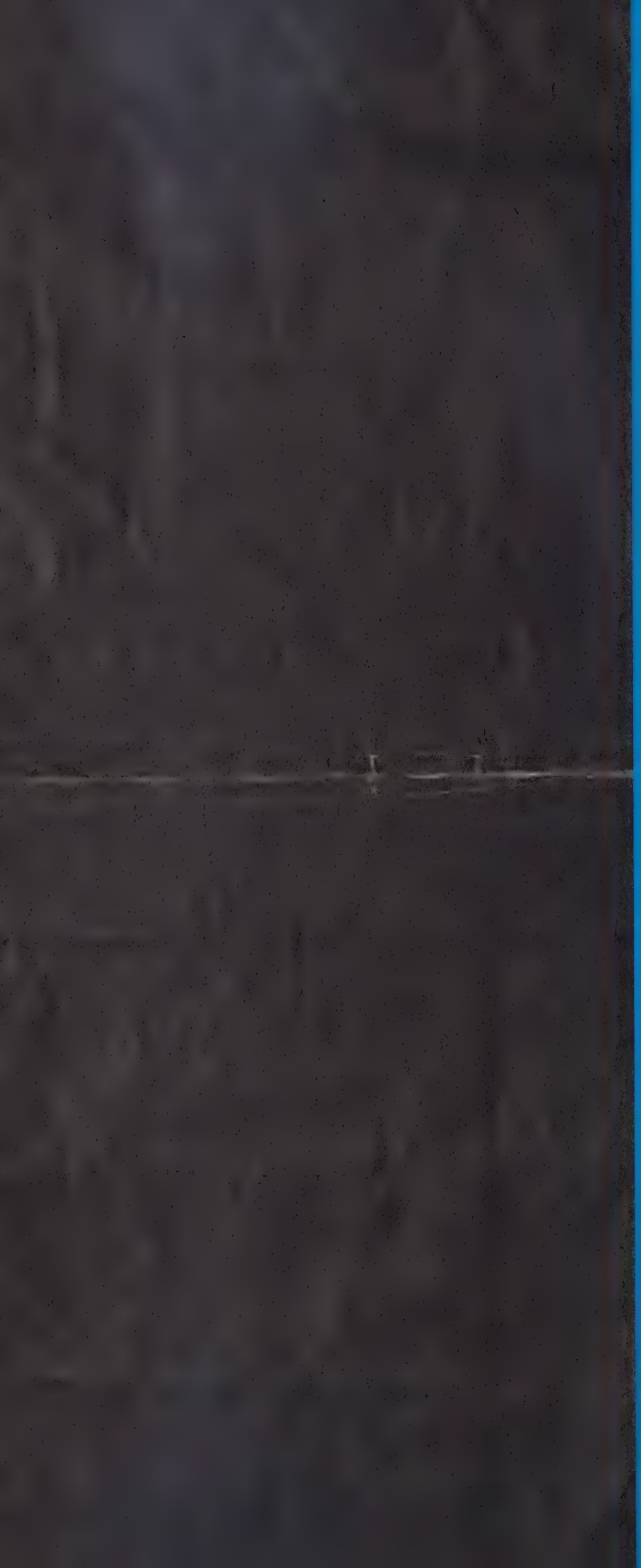
LOCATION

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

DATE

31 October–1 December 1962





CURATORS
Sidney Janis with Pierre Restany

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Peter Agostini, Arman, Enrico Baj, Gianfranco Baruchello, Peter Blake, Christo, Jim Dine, Öyvind Fahlström, Tano Festa, Raymond Hains, Robert Indiana, Yves Klein, John Latham, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Moskowitz, Claes Oldenburg, Peter Phillips, Martial Raysse, James Rosenquist, Mimmo Rotella, Mario Schifano, George Segal, Daniel Spoerri, Harold Stevenson, Wayne Thiebaud, Jean Tinguely, Per Olof Ultvedt, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselmann

EXHIBITION CATALOG
The New Realists. New York: Sidney Janis, 1962. With texts by Sidney Janis, Pierre Restany, and John Ashbery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 29
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

Although it was named after the group of French artists assembled around the critic Pierre Restany, the "New Realists" exhibition in New York was very much an American affair. This is not because the work in the show was predominantly American, for more of it was from Europe than from the United States. But the visual statement made by the exhibition—and the critical response—asserted the dominance of something new. The European works appeared old-fashioned alongside the brash American version of what came to be called Pop Art.

The exhibition was conceived in 1961 by dealer Sidney Janis as a kind of extension of "The Art of Assemblage" at the Museum of Modern Art (4 October–12 November, 1961). Traveling to France to find artists for his show, Janis enlisted Restany's help, and commissioned an essay for the catalog. He would find the essay to be untranslatable and published only a short excerpt. More important, by the time "New Realists" opened, the New York moment of Neo-Dada and its European equivalents had passed. When Restany joined the project he expected the American work to be like that in "The Art of Assemblage," employing the consumer cast-offs and urban detritus that characterized the objects of the Nouveaux Réalistes. But when some of the French artists arrived at the exhibition, they were shocked to find their pieces looking small and dusty alongside the large Pop paintings of clean, bright facture. In their view, Janis had used the Europeans to demonstrate the ascendancy of the latest American art. Restany would soon categorize the Americans as promoting "a modern fetishism of the object." But Allan Kaprow more accurately captured the cultural contrast when he observed that in the new American art world "the artist is in business."

The year 1962 in New York was very much the year of Pop, with January and February featuring exhibitions of Jim Dine, James Rosenquist, and Roy Lichtenstein. In the fall, an exhibition of Claes Oldenburg's soft sculpture show led into Janis's "New Realists," followed by exhibitions of Andy Warhol and Tom Wesselmann. Capping the year was a panel on Pop at the Museum of Modern Art, where Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Henry Geldzahler argued that to criticize the rapid success of these artists was to hold onto an outmoded myth of the alienated creator. In addition to the divide between Europeans and Americans, "New Realists" exposed a rift between young and old, between a world in which artists worked for years before making significant sales and one in which collectors and museums voraciously snapped up the new. Prompted by the exhibition and Janis's new affiliation with Pop, his established artists met in protest. Philip Guston, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Adolph Gottlieb left the gallery. Only Willem de Kooning remained.

The success of this exhibition in promoting the new Pop Art was due largely to its being mounted by such a prestigious gallery. Janis was associated with the great figures of Abstract Expressionism as well as such European post-war masters as Alberto Giacometti, whose tall sculpture could be glimpsed through a doorway at 15 East 57th Street. Because the dealer's elegant rooms were too small to house an exhibition of multiple works by twenty-nine artists, some pieces being quite large, he rented an additional venue on street level at 19 West 57th Street. Here passers-by came upon something more reminiscent of downtown, as they looked beyond a rack of brightly painted Oldenburg underwear into a gallery with ad hoc lighting, exposed sprinkler pipes, and temporary walls. The two-part show attracted twice the usual gallery attendance and triple the press coverage.

↑ Cover of *The New Realists* catalog, 1962.

→ Street view of the "New Realists" exhibition at the rented storefront space, 19 West 57th Street, New York. The exhibition was staged at two locations, the other being the Janis Gallery at East 57th Street, New York.

↗ ↗ The opening of the "New Realists" exhibition at 19 West 57th Street. Claes Oldenburg's work adorns the window, and on the left can be seen the corner of a Campbell Soup cans painting by Andy Warhol.

→→ Installation view of the exhibition at 19 West 57th Street. On the left is Jim Dine's panel of bathroom fixtures, and on the far wall is *I Love You With My Ford* by James Rosenquist; to the right hang Claes Oldenburg's painted plaster *Mu Mu* and Andy Warhol's painting of 200 Campbell Soup cans.

↑ Installation view at 19 West 57th Street showing (left to right) Daniel Spoerri's *Le Parc de Marcelle*, Roy Lichenstein's *Refrigerator*, Martial Raysse's *Pump Torso*, and Jime Dine's *Five Feet of Colorful Tools*.

→ The opening of the "New Realists" exhibition at 19 West 57th Street, with (left to right) Roy Lichtenstein's George *Washington*, Christo's *Package*, James Rosenquist's *I Love You With My Ford* and Harold Stevenson's *Eye of Lightning Billy*.

↗ ↗ Installation view at the Sidney Janis Gallery, 15 East 57th Street, showing (left to right) Jim Dine's *Lawnmower*, Enrico Baj's *Style Furniture*, Tom Wesselmann's *Still Life #17* (through doorway), Claes Oldenburg's *The Stove*, and Wayne Thiebaud's *Salads, Sandwiches & Desserts*.

→ → Installation view at the Sidney Janis Gallery, showing (left to right) Roy Lichenstein's *Blam*, Arman's *Accumulation of Sabres*, works by Yves Klein and Alberto Giacoetti (through doorway), and Jim Dine's *Lawnmower*.

BLAM

Installation views at the Sidney Janis Gallery, 15 East 57th Street, New York.

↑ A visitor looks into the pupil of Harold Stevenson's *Eye of Lightning Billy*, a massive canvas measuring 10 ft x 15 ft (3 m x 4.57 m).

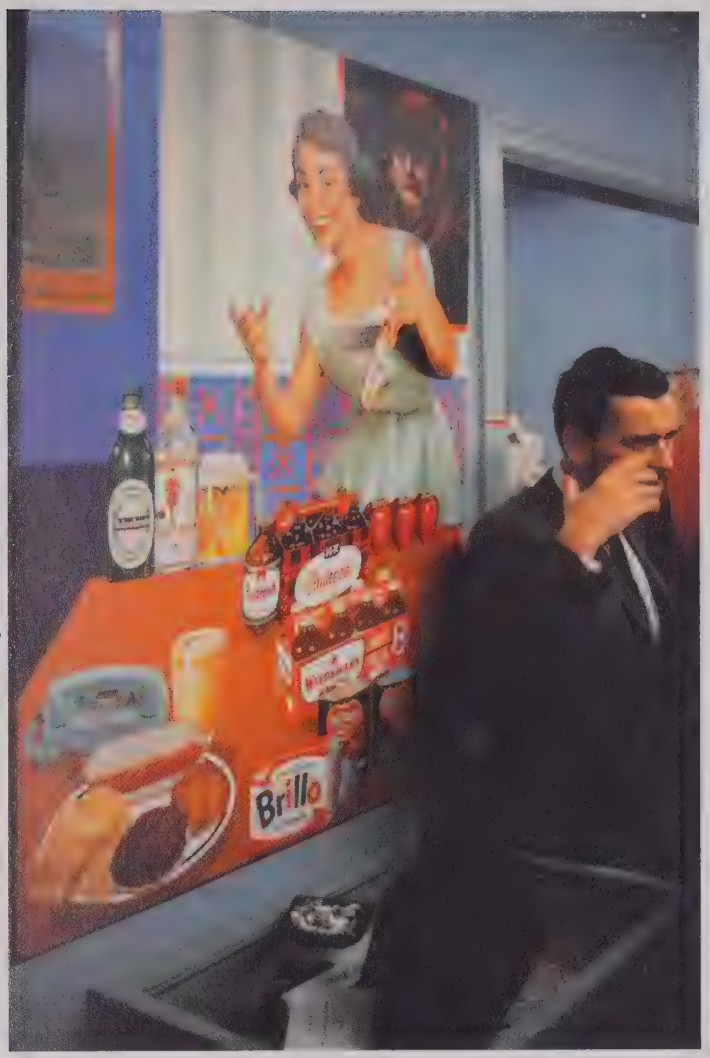
← Those bold enough to open Jean Tinguely's refrigerator (*Frigo Duchamp*) were greeted by a loud siren sound.

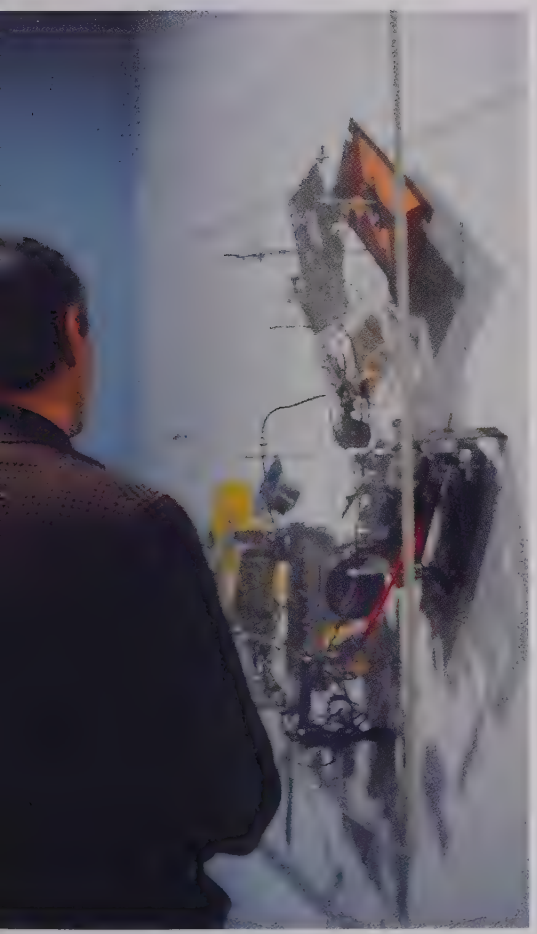
↗ Yves Klein's *sponge sculptures*.

↗ ↗ Tom Wesselmann's *Still Life #17*.

→ A work by Jean Tinguely made from radio parts.

→→ George Segal's *The Dinner Table*.


Brillo



ON THE THEME OF THE EXHIBITION

Sidney Janis
The New Realists (exh. cat.), 1962

Reaction and change in the continuity of art have never before undergone the rapid nor unpredictable succession of metamorphoses as they have in the twentieth century.

Cubism, Surrealism, Dadaism, and later Abstract Expressionism, to name only a few, were each in turn ardent dissidents from existing creative art forms and frequently before these forms were even accepted. The originality of each succeeding movement, challenged or maligned as it was, ultimately found its recognition.

Today's Factual artists*—and the work of these artists makes up the present exhibition—belong to a new generation (age average about thirty) whose reaction to Abstract Expressionism is still another manifestation in the evolution of art. As the Abstract Expressionist became the world-recognized painter of the 1950s, the new Factual artist (referred to as the Pop Artist in England, the Polymaterialist in Italy, and here as in France, the New Realist)** may already have proved to be the pacemaker of the 1960s.

City bred, the New Realist is a kind of urban folk artist. Living in New York, Paris, London, Rome, Stockholm, he finds his inspiration in urban culture. He is attracted to abundant everyday ideas and facts, which he gathers, for example, from the street, the store counter, the amusement arcade, or the home. Rediscovered by the artist and lifted out of its commonplace milieu, unembellished and without "artistic" pretensions, the daily object is revealed and intensified and becomes through the awareness it evokes a new aesthetic experience. In the unplanned transformation, the ordinary become extraordinary, the common, uncommon, a transposition in which the spirit of the common object becomes the common subject for these artists. Thus the traditional artist-invented work of art is supplanted unceremoniously by a true product of mass culture, the Readymade. Artists working in this direction form the central theme of the exhibition. Also dead center to the idea of the exhibition is work colored by other qualities in mass media. The billboard, magazine, comic strip, daily newspaper, very directly have been the inspiration of a variety of facts and ideas introduced by the new generation.

Repetition, another inevitable consequence of his environment, plays a role in the artist's choice. Accumulation, objects painted or gathered in great quantities, are leitmotifs, concentrated and accentuated by the New Realist. The multiplication of mass-produced objects into great accumulations imparts to the viewer a highly intensified visual experience. [...]

Because of its connotations, the label Neo-Dada, sometimes applied to the new work, needs clarification, for while the Dadaist then and the New Realist now have certain common ground, the aims of each art are in fact quite polar. Dada artists, disillusioned by the war, set out to destroy art; that despite negation and pessimism a new art form came into being is beside the point, but none the less, a windfall we now gratefully accept. Still, the Dadaist in attitude and intent was violently anti-art; the present-day Factualist, eschewing pessimism, is, on the contrary, intrigued and stimulated—even delighted—by the environment out of which he enthusiastically creates fresh and vigorous works of art. In this context, the angry young men of 1918, and the cool young men of today, are diametrically opposed.

But in the sense that the basic vocabulary of creative ideas survives, the long angry silence of Dada has ended, reborn with the healthy cry of a new generation. Duchamp, most prophetic of all the Dada painters, whose sense of irony and indifference saved him from involvement with contemporary vitriolic controversy, himself has become, in recent years, most influential and encouraging to Factual artists everywhere. Duchamp's Readymades of 1914 remain today artworks of vision and of particular significance and inspiration to the New Realist.

** Term first published in the book Collage by Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh, 1962.*
*** Other titles applied to artists with this point of view: Commonists; Neo-Dadists; Factualists; Artists of Pop Culture; and Popular Realists.*

THE NEW REALISM

John Ashbery
The New Realists (exh. cat.), 1962

The New Realism is the European term for the art of today that in one way or another makes use of the qualities of manufactured objects. As the name indicates, it is (like Surrealism) another kind of realism—the movement that began in the nineteenth century at about the same time that machines and machine-made objects began to play such an important part in daily life.

The artists in this exhibition are at an advanced stage of the struggle to determine the real nature of reality, which began at the time of Flaubert. One could point to other examples in the arts today (elsewhere for instance the "objective" novels of Robbe-Grillet and Sarrute, or the importance of objects, specially artifacts, in the recent films of Resnais and Antonioni) of this continuing effort to come to grips with the emptiness of industrialized modern life. The most successful way of doing this seems to be to accord it its due. That is, to recognize, that the phenomena evoked by the artists in this show are not phenomena, but part of our experience, our lives—created by us and creating us.

New Realism is not new. Even before Duchamp produced the first ready-made, Apollinaire had written that the true poetry of our age is to be found in the window of a barber shop. Picasso had constructed his absinthe glass; Gaudi his gigantic mosaic of broken dishes in the Parque Guéll, Gris had used the severely elegant Quaker Oats package in one of his collages; and the posters at Trouville were a favorite subject of the Fauves.

The explosion of Dada cleared the air by bringing these new materials violently to the attention of the public. Today's new realists are not neo-Dadaists in the sense that they copy the Dadaists; they are using a language which existed before Dada and has always existed. The way back to this language is what Dada forcibly laid bare. Today it is possible no longer to speak in metaphors, whereas in the 1920s a poet such as Eliot could not evoke a gasworks without feeling

obliged to call the whole history of human thought into play. In today's violent reaction to etiolated intellectualism, the artist has brought the gasworks into the home.

But why the object? Why are objects any more or any less important than anything else? The answer is that they are not, and that, I think is the secret of their popularity with these artists. They are a common ground, a neutral language understood by everybody and, therefore, the ideal material with which to create experiences that transcend the object (and that transcend them all the more effectively when they least seem to, as in the work of several of the artists in this group whose policy is simply to leave the objects alone).

What these artists are doing is calling attention with singular effectiveness to the ambiguity of the artistic experience; to the crucial confusion about the nature of art, which, let us remember, has never been properly defined. The sight of a fire hydrant may give me aesthetic pleasure keener than the sight of the Mona Lisa; both in fact are objects, things external to myself that accumulate the electrodes of my feelings on a number of subjects. As the French critic Françoise Choay points out, speaking of Duchamp: "On one side, the product of industry is denounced in its anonymity, its banality, its essential poverty which deprives it of human and poetic qualifications. On the other hand, it still remains an object that a simple decision on the part of the spectator can tear out from its context to give it mystery and opacity [...] The ready-made is satire, but at the same time it is also a proposition of asceticism and conversion."

The unmanageable vastness of our experience, the regrettable unpredictability of our aims and tastes, have been seized on by the New Realists as the core of a continuing situation; that of man on the one side and a colorful indifferent universe on the other. There is no moral to be drawn from this, and in any case the artist's work on this as on other occasions is not preaching or even meditation, but translation and exegesis, in order to show us where the balance of power lies in the yet-once-again altered scheme of things. Today it seems to repose in the objects that surround us; that is in our perceptions of them or, simply and once again, in ourselves.

A METAMORPHOSIS IN NATURE

The New Realists (exh. cat.), 1962

Pierre Restany

We are dealing with a new nature; a nature that has undergone a metamorphosis because of the changes in our emotions [...]

In Europe, as well as in the United States, we are finding new directions in nature, for contemporary nature is mechanical, industrial, and flooded with advertisements [...] The reality of everyday life has now become the factory and the city. Born under the twin signs of standardization and efficiency, extroversion is the rule of the new world [...]

The recognition of the expressive autonomy of the exterior object not only brings up the old question of the "concept of a work of art," but it poses at the first onset the problem of the interaction of objects with the individual psyche. This metaphysical look at technology has provoked an influence of the industrial object on the modern eye.

Recourse to the object corresponds to a need for clarification and precision in expression. Elaboration reduced to a minimum, the quantitative responsibility of choice is the important element.

'NEW REALISTS' MOCK U.S. MASS CULTURE IN EXHIBITION AT SIDNEY JANIS GALLERY

Brian O'Doherty

The New York Times, 31 October 1962

It's mad, mad, wonderfully mad. It's also (at different times) glad, bad and sad, and it may be a fad. But it's welcome. It is called "New Realists," and it opens today at 4 p.m. in the Sidney Janis Gallery at 15 East 57th Street.

The occasion is a rearguard action by the advance guard against mass culture—the mass culture that pushes the individual below the line into the lowest common denominator. In fact, it might be called an artful attempt to enrich spiritual poverty. Included are advertisements, cut-outs, garden tools, a lawn mower, newspapers, toothy Madison Avenue smiles, a refrigerator, cosmetics, plaster pastries—almost everything to assuage all appetites and nothing that you wouldn't see if you watched television commercials from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m.

All these defenseless objects are isolated, surrounded, manipulated in attempts to divert them from their everyday function to aesthetic ends. Here form follows malfunction.

To turn these numb and blunted weapons of industry back on their source, the exhibitors (the word "artist" would require redefinition for use here) make use of the standard ploys of an educated minority against a majority they indulgently despise—wit, satire, irony, parody, all the divisions of humor. The exhibitors have a great advantage: the target is known to them and to their audience. The target is so big that it's hard to miss.

The general tone is zippingly humorous, audaciously brash, making use of the industrial products of conformity in order to non-conform. Behind this satiric attack on Madison Avenue there stands the injured shadow of the Common Man, sadly using after shave lotion and brushing his teeth after every meal. Although the standard vocabulary of such antique art movements as Surrealism and Dada is used, the intent is entirely different: a fresh wind is blowing across the vast billboard wasteland, and anarchy is out. In Mr. Janis's definition of the "New Realist" art, the touchstone is the "daily object," so manipulated that aesthetic emotion is allowed to replace functional usage.

Although he does not keep strictly to his own definition (anyway it doesn't seem necessary to establish rigid cut-off points here), he has provided what must be the year's most entertaining show. "Entertaining" is the right word, for the show does not often transcend visual social comment: a sort of red, blue, and yellow journalism.

This is one of the most interesting developments in the galleries, for it marks the entrance of artists into social criticism with

ephemeral works that can be thrown away when circumstance has changed enough to remove their relevance. America has been a pioneer in throwaway cups and saucers, milk containers, and tablecloths. Now it is a pioneer in throwaway art. It might be added here that the catalog articles take this development very seriously. Pop Art, a very good name, becomes New Realism. Since the very essence of the movement is compounded of lightness, irreverence, and wit, it would be ridiculous to take it with deep philosophical seriousness. This would perform the nice trick of making mass culture esoteric.

Not all the show is lightweight, just as not all the show is American. There is good work from Britain and the Continent. But the clever things hook the eye. A dancing board shows the steps of a foxtrot. A rack of supermarket supplies is carefully compartmented. A la billboard hoardings, there is a vast, painted eye. There's also the old package trick—a package bound up with cord, with the permanent promise of unopened goods. There are papier-maché pastries. All these are smart one-shot rockets that have no second stage.

What is welcome is a higher sense of aesthetic responsibility among a few whose work has been turning up this year. Andy Warhol (despite his "Fox Trot"); Jim Dine, who goes past banality to produce some strange, seriously disturbing pieces, including a dislocating bathroom board with mirror, toothbrush, and soap dish; Tom Wesselmann, who parodies bright advertisements until they become slightly cuckoo, and, of course, Wayne Thiebaud. There is also excellent work by foreign artists, but it is more traditional in style. The main interest is the American satire of America's mass market. This is new.

The find of the exhibition is George Segal. His white life-size figures set up in hollow tableaus are as memorable and upsetting as stumbling into a ghost town dusted with fallout.

With this show, Pop Art is officially here. It is, of course, founded on the premise that mass culture is bad, an expression of spiritual poverty. So perhaps this is the old story of the avant-garde given the opportunity to seize on the bourgeois again, this time through its packaged products. Or, more amusingly, things may have reversed themselves and now it may be the bourgeois that shocks the avant-garde.

NEW REALISTS

Thomas B. Hess

Art News, December 1962

"New Realists," that is, younger American and European artists involved with ideas about art beyond Art as well as about commercial displays, advertising mediums, industrial design—all of it shoved forward at the spectator with undisguised delight, charm, and ingeniousness—were presented in a gallery, which has, by now, assumed a status for living painting that resembles the old Duveen's of the Master trade. It is in the reputation of the gallery that added a certain adrenaline quality to the manifestation. There is nothing particularly new about the artists themselves. Readers of these pages have encountered most of them on the Off-Tenth Street circuits for years, and in the Jackson gallery's "New Mediums" Exhibitions and among the Museum of Modern Art's "Assemblages." Their blown-up comic strips, fragmented broadways signs, mystico-banal numerologies were discussed in G. R. Senson's article last September. There have been surveys similar to the Janis affair in Southern California (Dwan Gallery), Philadelphia (YM–YWHA), and points in between. And the phenomenon is spreading joyously. The Guggenheim plans a survey of Pop Art; the Washington (D.C.) Gallery of Modern Art expects to do something similar in the spring; symposiums on the subject are scheduled for the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art.

A great deal has been written about these artists, and they are eminently writable-about—as against Abstract Expressionists, whose masterpieces convince you on nonverbal levels (i.e. aesthetically) and whose masters are shy of press conferences. The point of the Janis show, however, was an implicit proclamation that the New had arrived and it was time for all the old fogies to pack. What *Life* (the magazine) calls the "Red-Hot Take-Over Generation" was in, and as one shrieked at the first Jackson Gallery exhibition, "Next stop, Hollywood!" Indeed, there was a certain out-of-joint quality to the event as a piece of social history. A leading modernist, still in his thirties, said, "I feel a bit like a follower of Ingres looking at the first Monets." The terror was mutual, and the New Realists were eying the old abstractionists like Khrushchev used to eye Disneyland—"We will bury you" was their motto.

But, of course, the Janis Gallery's category was all wrong, the exhibition was chosen from a superficial bias and the whole thing was a tempest in a fur-lined teacup. The fact is, there is no Gang. There is a group of brilliant young artists who have been mixed with several extremely minor talents. The whole movement evolves with a kind of awesome inevitability out of New York School abstract art, and the only people who should have been surprised are the new collectors—and they are surprised at everything. The issue of descendance is important enough to dwell upon briefly. Many of the New Realists are inspired revivalists of past styles—of Magritte, of Picabia, Duchamp, and Man Ray. The whole idea of such a raid on the past was established by artists such as Motherwell, Newman, and, in a way, Gorky. Motherwell, for example, could ransack Matisse and Picasso with perfect equanimity, because Motherwell was using all their elements for totally new ends and with totally different assumptions. Later Stankiewicz and Rauschenberg reworked Schwitters and the Dada constructions, again with the sanction of a "different" American aesthetic. Another direct ancestor is Barnett Newman: given the stripe, you can assume Jasper Johns's American Flag. More important, once given Newman's assumption of the possibility of enormous psychic energy behind the most obvious-looking "composition"—the symmetrical disposition of two planes interrupted by an obviously sensitized stripe—you can extrapolate the idea of the banal image itself, taken from the most banal sources—advertising, comic strips, etc.

Given Larry River's Washington Crossing the Delaware, Warhol's celebration of the dollar bill that enshrines the Father of Our Country has its own comical fatality.

But, as the writer pointed out when discussing early works of the New York Abstract Expressionists, just because something is bound to happen does not make it easy to do so. For example, just because Willem de Kooning used, in the process of creating his own style, ideas from commercial art, the colors of supermarket packages, the idea of the All-American Doll who parades daily on the flanks of the Railway-Express trucks, just because this has been "given" (as a problem in elementary geometry will be "given") doesn't make the solution available. As Saul Steinberg remarked, it took Tinguely to discover the identity of the refrigerator. When he put, inside the mechanism, a siren that blasts when you open the numb white door, he gave an identity to the kitchen deity. Tinguely understands the radio and its hysteria like Dali understood the telephone. Jim Dine's Bathroom, with its mirror and toothbrushes and medicine cabinet all in a horrible "sick flesh" pink—like a newborn baby or bleeding gums—has a quality of strangeness and revelation. Segal's plaster-cast people sitting around, waiting for doomsday, combine the sick laughter of "The Monster Mash" with something far more ominous and powerful. Oldenburg makes a whole new world out of papier mâché and foam and rubber and enamel paints—each little thing we take for granted, from a frankfurter to a pair of pants—like a garment-district Jehovah.

The European entries, on the other hand, look feeble in this lineup. Some Englishmen do comic strips that try to say "WOW" but can only manage the equivalent of "Coo, matey." Arman assembles a box of sabers that look so chic one feels he has swiped the Assemblage from the Jockey Club's mantlepiece. Some of the other Americans, in falling for the banal, have fallen into it. Lichenstein, for example, makes folk art with the ingratiating, cozy qualities of a weather vane. He seems to have fallen in love with techniques, which is the sure sign of a commercial artist. Lichenstein looks like a master next to Warhol, who has not only fallen in love with how he does something, but he seems to dote on what he is doing it about—like Norman Rockwell. As for Rosenquist, his ambivalent parody of the billboard still seems caught by the sentimental, Whitmanesque Americanism that haunts these artists as badly as nostalgia haunted the Beat poets. But the painters' involvement with folk art may save them from the straightjackets of Romanticism and mysticism. Certainly "New Realism" has caught on in the provinces, where every second amateur and eccentric is assembling torn pinups and huge chunks of timber and burlap into local protests about universal issues. And the reaction may work both ways; the nuts show the artists what not to do. Marisol, who was absent from the Janis exhibition, has learned from folk art how to invent with aesthetic distance. She has made the most successful comments on the scene. As for protest, Sam Goodman and Boris Lurie, also absent from this exhibition, point to the opposite moral—if you want to protest, you have to get your hands dirty. And this suggests a final comment on the exhibition: a disparate show including the very good with the mediocre, it looks too scrubbed and hygienic to represent the limits of art.

THE NEW REALISTS

Sidney Tillim

Arts Magazine, December 1962

With the same business acumen and perfect timing that made him the Duveen of Abstract Expressionism, dealer Sidney Janis has moved in on the Pop Art craze at harvest time. Let us not underestimate the importance of the association of his gallery with Pop Art at the present time. Mr. Janis, whom *The New Yorker* described in its profile of him two years ago as "that self-contradictory creature, a cautious member of the avant-garde," is capable of certifying a trend, though he is not responsible for it, merely by signifying his willingness to trade in it.

It was the awareness of his reputation that led to stunned reactions when the first reports that he had signed Jim Dine (and Louise Nevelson) struck the New York scene shortly after artists and dealers began trickling back into the city at the end of the summer. Dine and Nevelson are the first new American artists he has taken on in years, with the exception of Adolph Gottlieb. He was content in the interim with people like De Kooning, Kline, and Pollock. But given the sudden saturation of the market by this new craze (and new Pop artists are appearing every day), the feeling is that its life expectancy is short and that Mr. Janis's move may already be belated. In Dine, who is now working with tools, he has picked a lemon instead of a peach.

All of which may, in part, explain his possibly cautionary step in extending the domestic perimeter of Pop Art to include international variants. Artists from France, England, Italy, and Sweden were invited. Thus, we find the soap dishes and tools stuck to canvas by Jim Dine sharing the environment of the "accumulations" of sabers and ancient faucets of France's Arman. The Buck Rogers Surrealism of Sweden's Oyvind Fahlstrom compares notes with Roy Lichtenstein's blow-up of a comic-book air battle. England's Peter Blake collects sentimental postcards and pinups for his Love Wall. Daniel Spoerri of France sticks oddments of things to a folding mirror and Tom Wesselmann clips ads for his consumer-goods still life. That this mixing does violence to the different social and cultural nationalities involved barely seems to have been considered, as interest is directed to building up the momentum of a new International Style. At the same time it is argued in catalog statements by John Ashbery, Pierre Restany, and Mr. Janis himself (who, at least, lives in the United States) that the New Realism, which is the European term for Pop Art, which is the much-preferred English term for neo-Dadaism, is out of Dadaism and the readymade of Marcel Duchamp. Which, again, ignores the utterly different circumstances of their respective emergences. The search for recognition by Pop artists is

comparable; their immediate admission to the tradition of the new, their spontaneous eruption, their lack of organization, ideology, and an intellectual secretariat are not.

This is New York, 1962, not Zurich, 1917. Meanwhile, if the "Americanization" (terrible thing) of Europe has appalled the popes of culture abroad, why should Pop Art be the rage among the Europeans most likely to be offended—the artists? It is probably because of this ticklish irony that the Americans dominate the exhibition. Who should understand vulgarity better in a world both more and less "equal" than it was forty-five years ago? Who would think of blowing up a do-it-yourself painting but an American (Andy Warhol)? Who would think of something so esoteric as painting a sponge pink but a Frenchman (the late Yves Klein, who overnight is arbitrarily provided the stylistic provenance no one attributed to him when he showed previously at the Castelli Gallery, a Pop Art stronghold)? There is nothing Surreal, nothing coated with ennui, about the Americans. They give you the thing itself—pow!

NEW REALISM CONQUERS NEW YORK

Pierre Restany

Art International, January 1963

One fact dominates the New York season: Mr. Sidney Janis's sensational stand in favor of New Realism. In a sudden turnaround in November 1962, Mr Janis, who until recently had been fully dedicated to the leaders of Abstract Expressionism, has used my name, and above all my terminology, to present an international group of distinctly heterogeneous artists who share the pretence of assuming a new sense of urban nature. This viewpoint was sufficiently broad to allow for the inclusion of static or dynamic assemblage works (Tinguely, Arman, Spoerri, Raysse, Oldenburg, Segal, Christo), combine paintings (in the style of Jim Dine, or Yves Klein's sponge reliefs), collages (Baj, Wesselmann), and, finally, trompe-l'oeil paintings (Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rosenquist). It is for obvious reasons of convenience that the term "Nouveaux Réalistes" has prevailed over its direct competitors—Neo Dada, Junk Culture, Pop Art, Popular Realists, Commonists, Factualists.

I shall certainly not condemn Mr. Janis's borrowing of this term, which essentially fills me with delight, since it was for the same reasons of convenience that I adopted it a little more than two years ago. However, the reality it embraces is diverse. [...]

Sidney Janis's exhibition stands in the shadow cast by Assemblage Art, the great exhibition organized last year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York by William Seitz. In trying to avoid positioning himself in a direct line with this previous exhibition, Mr. Janis chose to deprive himself of certain presences that would otherwise have been highly significant—those of César, Chamberlain, and Stankiewicz, among others. Finally, the lack of space is invoked to justify the absence of artists, such as Niki de St. Phalle, [George] Brecht, [Robert] Filliou, [Bruce] Conner, or [Edward] Kienholz (the latter two being the leaders of the Californian avant-garde).

All these gaps, while distorting the spirit of any objective comparison, nevertheless have the indirect merit of stressing the dialectical opposition between the artists from Paris and those from New York. By purely and simply assimilating new realism with urban folklore, Sidney Janis has considerably expanded the boundaries of the problem, that is to say the relations between the artist and the "urban" object. In this matter, positions harden: the Americans, generally speaking, re-create a kind of obsessional iconography of the object. All artistic practices, from assemblage to repetition or systematic enlargement, concur in this fetishism. Rather paradoxically, the discovery of the object sometimes takes place in a paraliterary mode: in the work of Warhol and Wesselmann, one already senses a kind of mannerism of the representational process. American New Realism seems submerged by the small masters of a new uncanny. [...]

Ultimately—and this is the central phenomenon—everything happens as though, based on the same sense of sociological reality, America had forged for itself a cultural past, and Europe an energetic future. In New York, artists who are now considered "classics," such as Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, [John] Chamberlain, or [Richard] Stankiewicz, ensure the transition from the preceding Expressionism to a new representational attitude toward reality, in three dimensions (Oldenburg's colored plaster casts, Segal's life plaster casts of human bodies) or two dimensions (Lichtenstein's and Warhol's trompe l'oeil). But in the end there is not the slightest breach of continuity, neither spiritual nor technical. We are simply witnessing the birth of a new style that follows the others, and the event has now been officialized on the baptismal font of the Janis Gallery.

In Europe, the questioning of the expressive vocabulary appears to be much more radical, at least for the time being. Each artist's creative approach is articulated around a fundamental gesture and a liminal position that is the key to it: the primacy of color for Yves Klein, the notion of accumulation or fragmentation for Arman, mechanical animation for Tinguely, the selection of posters for Hains or Rotella, as well as Spoerri's trap-paintings, Raysse's displays, Christo's packings, or Niki de St. Phalle's "shootings." This absolutism has its risks (if only that of abusive systematization and formulas), but it directly conditions the various aspects of an artwork and gives it a logic, coherence, a superior raison d'être. This undoubtedly explains the immediate success encountered in New York by the European artists who have successively exhibited at the Iolas Gallery: Niki de St. Phalle, Yves Klein, Martial Raysse, and Tinguely. Through the works on display, the New York public, who are more and more "realistically" inclined, have grasped the basic principle, the coordinating element of it all. Because they fail to adopt such a resolute stance, some American artists lack depth and power of affirmation, and immediately fall prey to mannerism. In short, it was high time these young stylists breathed in some fresh air: with his exhibition-encounter, Mr. Janis has greatly contributed to propagating this invigorating wind from Europe.

03

EXHIBITION

Primary Structures

LOCATION

Jewish Museum, New York

DATE

27 April–12 June 1966

CURATOR
Kynaston McShine

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Carl Andre, David Annesley, Richard Artschwager, Larry Bell, Ronald Bladen, Michael Bolus, Anthony Caro, Tony DeLap, Walter De Maria, Tom Doyle, Dan Flavin, Peter Forakis, Paul Frazier, Judy Gerowitz, Daniel Gorski, David Gray, Robert Grosvenor, David Hall, Douglas Huebler, Donald Judd, Ellsworth Kelly, Phillip King, Lyman Kipp, Gerald Laing, Sol LeWitt, John McCracken, Tina Matkovic, Robert Morris, Forrest Myers, Peter Phillips, Peter Pinchbeck, Salvatore Romano, Tim Scott, Anthony Smith, Robert Smithson, Michael Todd, Anne Truitt, William Tucker, Richard Van Buren, David van Schlegell, Isaac Wilkin, Derrick Woodham

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Primary Structures. New York: Jewish Museum, 1966. Essay by Kynaston McShine, with texts by artists.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 42
Number of works: ca.51
Total attendance: unknown

While "Primary Structures" has come down to us as a founding exhibition of austere American Minimalism, it was actually something very different. Not only was it a show of work by sculptors from Britain and the United States, but the diversity of content went well beyond national origin. The curvaceous British sculpture and what came to be called Minimalism were joined by works made in the heroic spirit of Abstract Expressionism, and by pieces from Southern California fabricated of glossy new materials.

Ironically, "Primary Structures" grew from the idea of a show much closer to the way it is misremembered. Kynaston McShine and his Museum of Modern Art colleague Lucy Lippard had discussed such an exhibition before McShine was appointed Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Jewish Museum, an institution known for groundbreaking shows of contemporary art. When asked to mount a sculpture exhibition, McShine returned to the notion of basic structures as manifested in the work of Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, and their fellows. But he expanded the show to include the more expressive sculpture featured downtown at the Park Place Gallery and new works from California. And while McShine had not been to London to see the Whitechapel Gallery's "The New Generation: 1965," its notoriety led to the pairing of his exhibition's subtitle, "Younger American and British Sculptors." About a quarter of the artists in "Primary Structures" were British, and most of them had been in the Whitechapel show. In the end, rather than an exhibition focused on a relatively narrow kind of art, it became a survey of new sculpture exemplifying what the curator saw as a broad "stylistic tendency."

The title "Primary Structures" also alluded to primary colors. In fact, it was a very colorful show, something obscured by the black-and-white installation photographs. Outside at the entrance the blue of Anthony Caro's steel *Titan* contrasted with Tony Smith's somber black *Free Ride*, a juxtaposition intended to mark these artists as father figures for what was to follow. Color was a dominant feature of the ensuing British work, from Tim Scott's Peach Wheels to Isaac Witkin's purple Nagas. But much of the American sculpture also employed color as an important element, from the pastels of Judy Gerowitz (later, Judy Chicago) and Ellsworth Kelly's Blue Disk framed in the red light of Dan Flavin's florescent tubes, to Forrest (Frosty) Myers's multicolor hanging triangles, Anne Truitt's yellow-and-green *Sea Garden* alongside Richard Artschwager's *Table with Pink Tablecloth*, and Robert Grosvenor's huge hanging *Transoxiana* in red and black. But apart from the bright blue strip connecting Donald Judd's row of hanging cubes, most of the classic Minimalist works in the show—such as Sol LeWitt's first modular cube, Carl Andre's line of firebricks, and Robert Morris's two L's—were without assertive color.

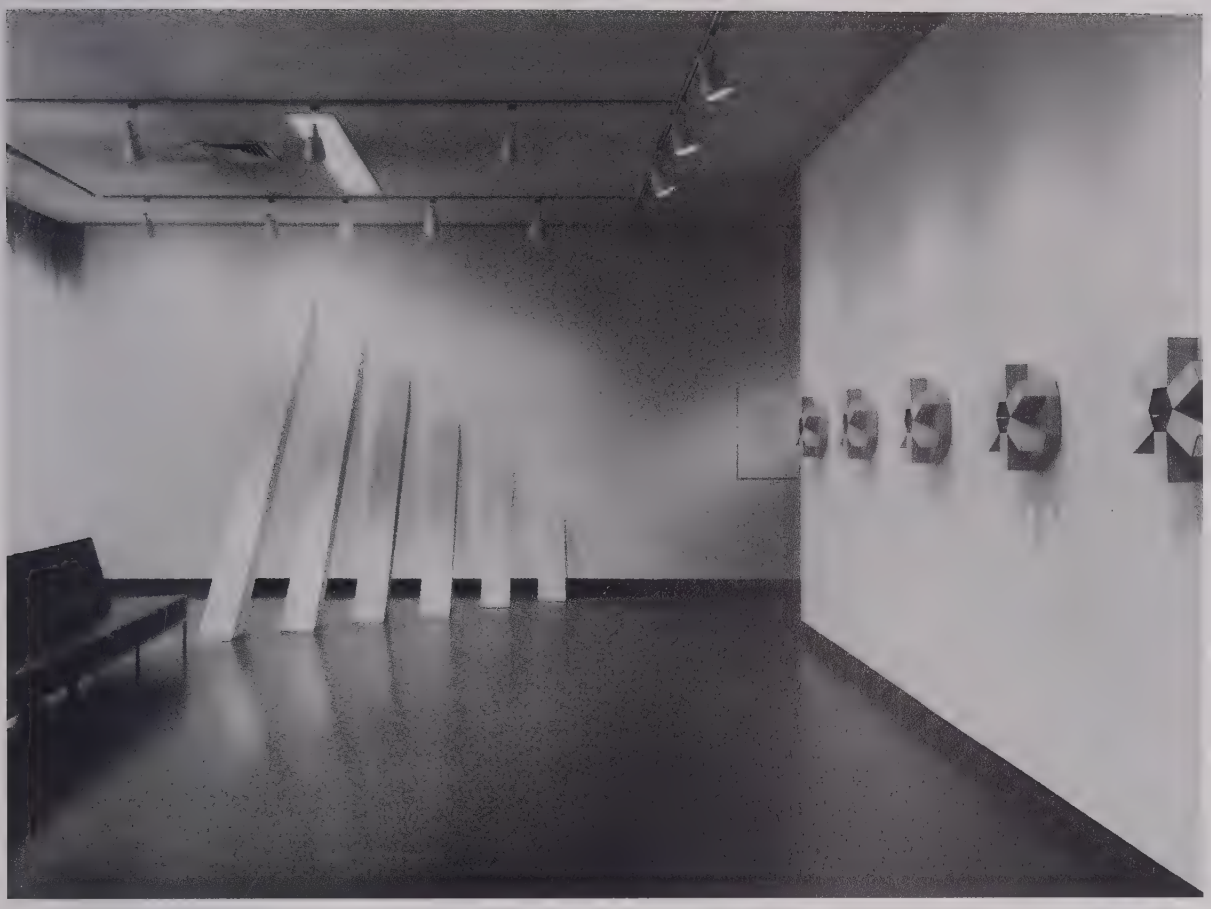
Despite all of the color and exuberant line employed throughout the exhibition, critic Hilton Kramer saw "Primary Structures" as signaling a new aesthetic of detachment and anonymity. Signs of the artist's hand might have been removed by American Pop painting, but with the abstract forms and industrialized look of these sculptures, the corner seemed to have been turned irrevocably. So while the show might not have been predominantly Minimalist—an appellation irritating everyone to whose work it was applied—this was the ethos toward which it led, and its legacy. And soon after the exhibition closed, the July issue of *Harper's Bazaar* touted the new "minimal look" in couture, along with sections featuring artists from "Primary Structures." Thus, the exhibition both directed attention toward rigorous sculpture felt to be impersonal, and reinforced its transformation into a fashionable style.

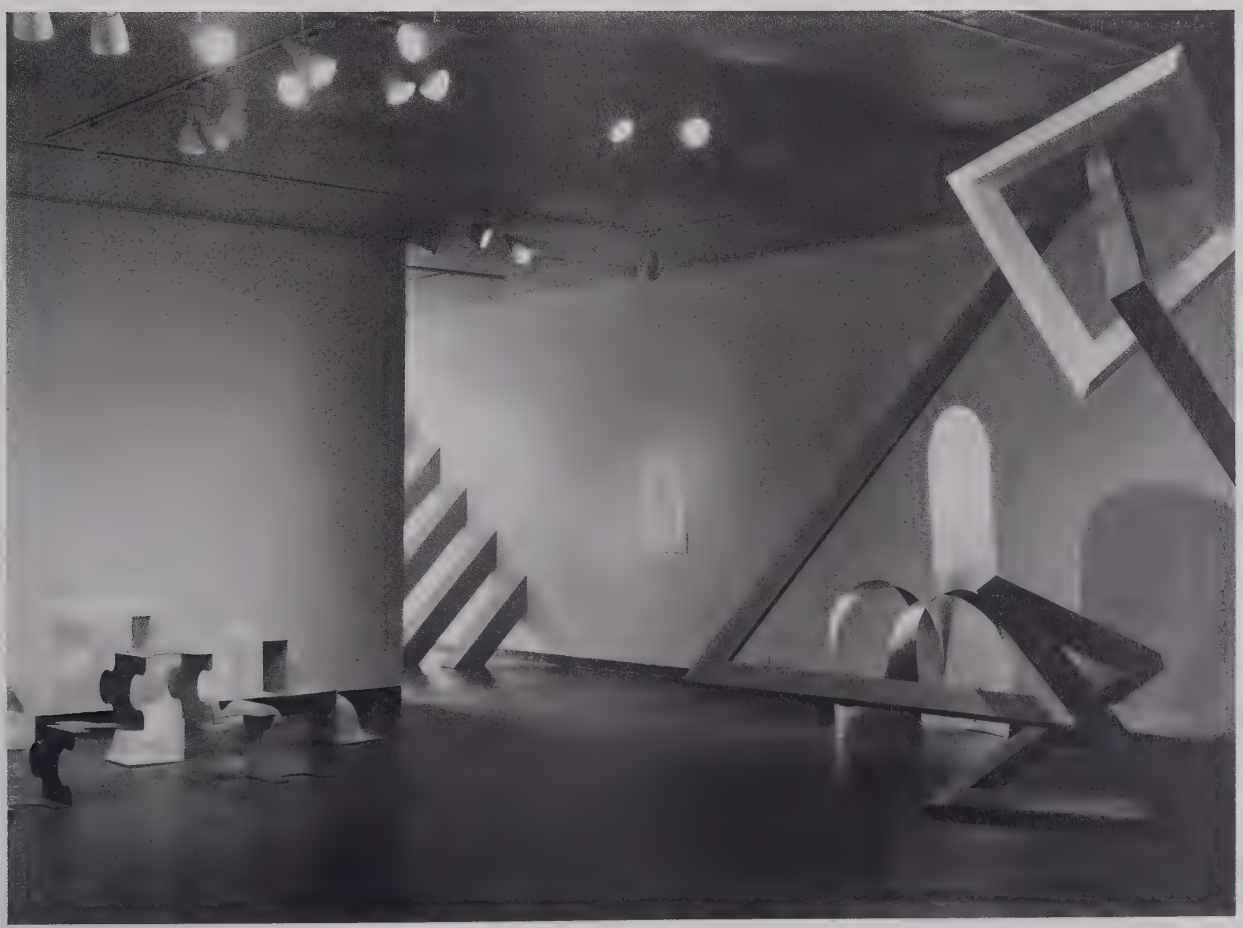
← The cover for the *Primary Structures* exhibition catalog was designed by Elaine Lustig Cohen.

↓ In the Sculpture Court at the entrance to the Jewish Museum were sculptures by two British artists and one American: (from left) Anthony Caro's *Titan* and David Annesley's *Swing Low;* not shown is American artist Tony Smith's *Free Ride*.

→ View of the lobby. On the left is Judy Gerowitz's *Rainbow Picket*, and on the wall to the right is Robert Smithson's *The Cryosphere*. Although the photographs record the works in black and white, many of the objects exhibited at "Primary Structures" were very colorful, with Gerowitz's *Rainbow Picket* having six hues, ranging from cyan to yellow. Gerowitz would later change her name to Judy Chicago.

↘ Gallery 1, looking through to the lobby. To the left is William Tucker's *Meru I, Meru II, Meru III;* in the lobby is *Rainbow Picket* by Judy Gersowitz, Peter Forakis's *JFK*, and Forrest Myers' suspended structure *Zigarat*.





↖ Gallery 2, showing (left to right) Richard Van Buren's *Free Epton*, Isaac Witkin's *Vegas*, and Carl Andre's floor sculpture, *Lever*, made from 137 firebricks.

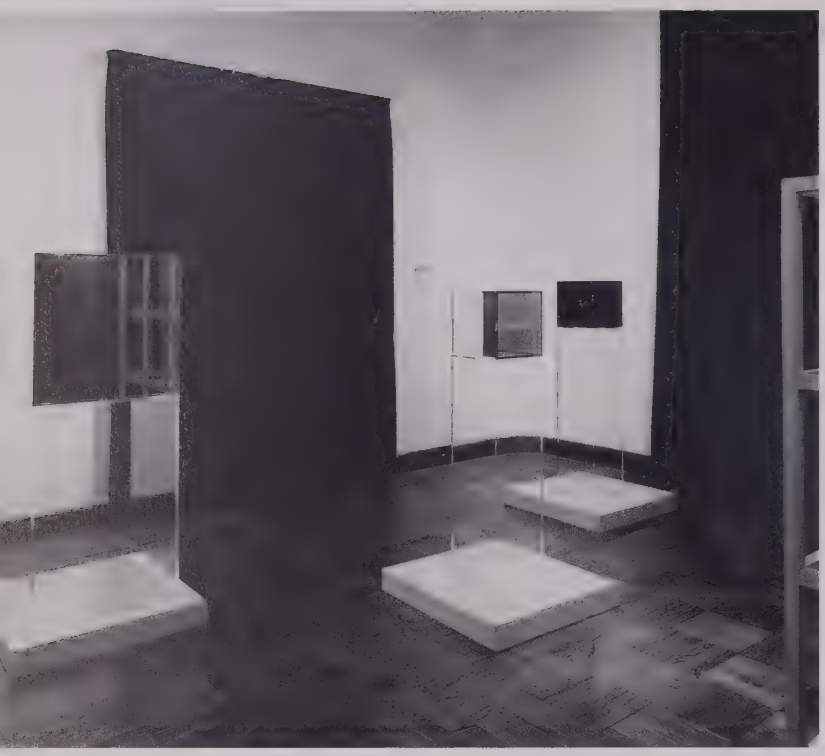
←← Kynaston McShine, curator of "Primary Structures," at the opening of the exhibition, April 1966. Behind him is Ronald Bladen's *Three Elements*.

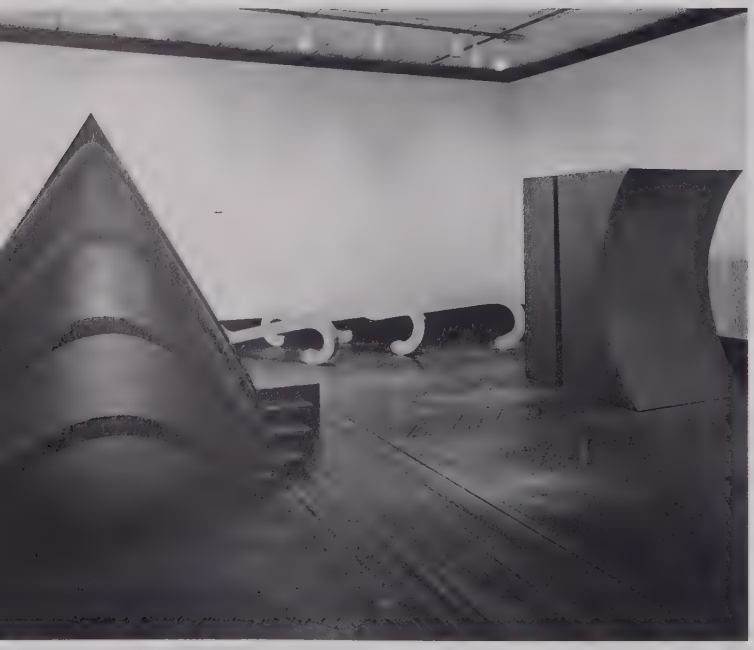
← Opening night of "Primary Structures." To the left of the woman dressed in a Minimalist-inspired dress is Tim Scott's *Peach Wheels*.

↑↑ Gallery 4, showing (left to right) Richard Artschwager's colorful *Formica Table with Pink Tablecloth*, Anne Truitt's white-and-green *Sea Garden*, and Paul Frazier's *Pink Split*.

↑ Gallery 5, with Ronald Bladen's *Three Elements*. Made from black-painted steel and polished aluminum, each element is 9 ft (2.74 m) tall.

→ Gallery 5, showing (left to right) Donald Judd's untitled cubes, Robert Morris's two untitled L-shaped beams, and Robert Grosvenor's *Transoxiana*.





↖ Gallery 8, showing Larry Bell's three untitled glass cubes. The work on the left reflects Sol Le Witt's large wooden structure, which is partly visible to the right of the photograph.

↑ Gallery 8, with Sol LeWitt's untitled painted wooden structure (left) and Walter De Maria's stainless steel *Cage* (right).

← Gallery 10, showing Phillip King's *Through* (left), Daniel Gorski's *Fourth Down* (center), and Peter Pinchbeck's *Space Jump* (right).

INTRODUCTION

Kynaston McShine

Primary Structures (exh. cat.), 1966

Advances and innovations in all the arts of the twentieth century have been stimulated by the artist's re-examination and extension of definitions in his particular activity and medium. Is Finnegans Wake a novel or a poem? Is the Cubist collage an attempt toward sculpture? Is a Happening dance, drama, or does it lie in the realm of painting and sculpture?

Even more than the other arts, painting and sculpture have been impelled to test primary definitions and basic aesthetic issues. The artist himself has constantly reappraised the inherent nature of a painting or a sculpture in their making, thus revising the accepted standards of the past by the innovations he has introduced.

Increasingly in recent years, both the artist and the audience reject rigid categories, or the traditional limits of media. It is tradition that makes us arbitrarily fix boundaries and aesthetic categories. Depending upon the way in which space is used and occupied by a form, the material means, and the artist's intention, as we may understand it, we name the work a "painting" or a "sculpture."

Today, many painters are challenging and questioning the traditional rectilinear shape of the canvas, the edge, surface color, conventional means of achieving form, and even the space around the canvas. They recognize the support is a three-dimensional object, and this new awareness is given emphatic structural meaning in their forms. They carefully examine the differences that oil and acrylic paints may bring to the total effect of the work of art and some often abandon the brush entirely, staining, cropping, or spraying paint onto their surfaces.

Similarly, some sculptors question in their work the function of the pedestal, the relationship of spectator and sculptural space, and the choice of materials. The reason for doing so are both aesthetic and quite often economic, since many of the new synthetics they employ are far less expensive than traditional sculptural materials. The sculptors have directed their attention to the enlarged-scale "color field painting," and pictorial advances in the handling of surface, color, illusion, mass, and light have all influenced their work. They have also had to consider the major accomplishments and implications of twentieth-century engineering and architecture, which have a direct bearing on their art.

As a result, many of the sculptors of the 1960s have been the most critical and radical among artists in respect to work of the recent past. Their activity has become purposely more philosophical and conceptual in content. They are anxious to work out what sculpture is and to discover how to make it. Most of the sculptors are university trained, have read philosophy, are quite familiar with other disciplines, have a keen sense of history, express themselves articulately, and are often involved in a dialectic. The work is extremely sophisticated and intellectual, of difficult and problematic content if not form, and sometimes polemical with its implied criticism of past modes.

The generally large scale of the work and its architectural proportions allow the sculpture to dominate the environment. At times the sculpture intrudes aggressively on the spectator's space, or the spectator is drawn into sculptural space. Often the structure acts ambiguously, creating a spatial dislocation for the spectator with complex meanings.

Since most of these structures are made for the indoors, their immense size and assault on intimate scale carry an implicit social criticism. Collectors and even museums generally do not have the physical space these works demand. The large sculptures of Robert Morris, Robert Grosvenor, Ronald Bladen, and Phillip King are often difficult to accommodate in rooms or exhibition galleries. The use of a standard fabricated unit by Donald Judd, Carl Andre, or Dan Flavin gives their work an anonymity that, presumably, could be repeated or duplicated by any outsider. Their work thus gains an availability and accessibility that removes sculpture from any connotation of the precious "fine arts" object. The sculptors represented in this exhibition are not consciously allied in a school or in a specific movement, but they do share a stylistic tendency, and it is useful to indicate some of the characteristics that governed their selection. The work is often architectonic, if not architectural. Most of the sculptures do not use a base or pedestal, some are oriented to the walls, and some even to the ceiling. The artist feels free to utilize and activate the space of a room or the outdoors according to the necessities of the work.

Generally, bright, vibrant color is in evidence, and when color is not applied, the intrinsic color of the sculptural material asserts itself. The sculpture rejects patina and embellishment; color acts like a skin on a surface, which is always smooth and never worked by hand or textured. The surface takes on the role of extending the interweavings of the shape and clarifying the image; color and shape often lose their distinctions in a new unity of tangible form and illusion.

Most of these works contain irony, paradox, mystery, ambiguity, even wit, as well as formal beauty, qualities that have often been considered positive values in art. Recent characterizations, such as "minimal" or "cool," are inadequate; they are not descriptive of the experience and only partially of the means. Simplicity in structure allows for maximum concentration and intensity, and does not necessarily imply vacuity; it usually, in fact, connotes a rich complexity of formal relationship and experience.

These structures are conceived as "objects," abstract, directly experienced, highly simplified, and self-contained. There is no overt surrealistic content in the sculpture, and the anthropomorphic is rejected. The structures are generally not "compositions." Shape, color, and material have a physical concreteness and unity that's both elegant and monumental, expressive or restrained, but always challenging.

The sculpture has benefited from modern technology and industry. The sculptor can now conceive his work, and entrust its execution to a manufacturer whose precision and skill convey the standardized "impersonality" that the artist may seek. Plastics, fiberglass, aluminum, fluorescent light have allowed the

sculptor to formulate ideas and create dramatic visual effects that at any other time would have been impossible; as one artist has put it: "We are about to redesign the world."

ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

Douglas Huebler

I wish to make an image that has no privileged position in space, and neither an "inside" nor an "outside." Color is used to float the weight and the parallel lines to move the form from volume toward flatness (or illusion). The formica is a skin that relieves the object of its "history."

Donald Judd

I object to several popular ideas. I don't think anyone's work is reductive. The most the term can mean is that new work doesn't have what the old work had. It's not so definitive that a certain kind of form is missing; a description and discussion of the kind present is pretty definitive. New work is just as complex and developed as old work. Its color and structure and its quality aren't more simple than before; the work isn't narrow or somehow meaningful only as form. Prior work could be called reductive, too; it would have less color, less scale, and less clear form; compared to the new work, it would even mean less since then much of its own meaning would be irrelevant.

"Minimal" and "ABC" are recent reductions of "reductive."

Both "minimal" and "reductive" were first used by critics who liked the work the words referred to, and later by those who thought it the end of the line. "Boring" and "monotonous" are also sympathetic words. I can't see how any good work can be boring or monotonous in the usual sense of those words. And no one has developed an unusual sense of them. This negative characterization is glib; it's another label and one not even concerned with what the work is.

"Non-art," "anti-art," "non-art art," and "anti-art art" are useless. If someone says his work is art, it's art.

John McCracken

I think of color as being the structural material I use to build the forms I am interested in. The fact that in another sense I use plywood, fiberglass, and lacquer as structural materials is of less importance. I have found that a certain range of mainly primary and secondary colors and a certain combination of color intensity and transparency and surface finish provide me with the expressive means I want, at least for the present.

Peter Pinchbeck

This work, and others I have completed, combines the features of both painting and sculpture. Color and form are equally important, as is the interplay of positive and negative space. Rather than being a shape in space, this work shapes the space it occupies.

Salvatore Romano

I don't think artists should talk about their work because nine out of ten times the talk has very little to do with what they are doing. However, I feel the association of art and life must be a constant interrelationship. The essence of time that passes, art captures.

Robert Smithson

Block Encodement #1 010010010010010010 X 12M = 72(1) + 144(0)

1. 010010010010010010 is the tentative sequence for the placement of the six solid hexagonal modules.
2. Each module has 12 mirror surfaces (12M).
3. 6 modules are visible.
4. 12 modules are invisible.
5. 72 mirror surfaces are visible.
6. 144 mirror surfaces are invisible.
7. $66^{2/3}$% of the entire work is invisible.
8. Invent your sight as you look. Allow your eyes to become an invention.
9. Color by Krylon Inc.
   Surf Green, No. 2002
   Pigment.....2.92%
   Titanium Dioxide.....100.00%
   Tinting material less than.....5.00%
   Non-volatile (from vehicle).....9.08%
   Cellulose Nitrate, Coconut Oil
   Modified Alkyd, Phthalate Esters
   Plasticizer, GL-358 Phenolic
   Resin Penetrant
   Volatile.....48.00%
   Ketones, Esters, Alcohols,
   Aromatic Hydrocarbons
   Propellent.....48.00%
   Halogenated Hydrocarbons.....100.00%
10. Phrases of one module as photographed by Gretchen Lambert.

Intervals of height measured in inches from the floor to camera aperture. (See phased-detail)

Clock Position:

9	10	11	1	2	3
Height (Inches):					
$61^{1/2}$	$55^{1/2}$	$39^{1/2}$	$39^{1/2}$	$55^{1/2}$	$61^{1/2}$

Anne Truitt

There was a blue sea, and above it was a yellow hill and beside the hill was a green field.

On the other side of the blue sea was a blue sea, and on the other side of the yellow hill was a yellow hill, and on the other side of the green field was a green field.

And that was a sea garden.

William Tucker

My work comes out of a sculpture tradition and those elements in it (for example its frontality, the use of color, and neutral materials) that might seem to relate it to painting, function for me, paradoxically, to enhance the physical reality of the object: the object, not in the sense of a bounded, contained "thing" made of a determinable material, but the object standing to the spectator as subject, in a sense as his reflection in the world of things.

The kinds of order and articulation in the sculpture are not based on absolutes but are an attempt to order in reality the sensations we have of our own physical existence.

David von Schlegell

There is a certain madness, a relinquishing of control in the air now. There is something beautiful about this. The beauty lies in the split second, the time of a blink of an eye. I try to split the second and preserve what I find. I have evolved an extraordinary

laborious process for doing this. I make sculpture that absorbs a killing amount of time, and of physical and mental energy. But I like the work, and would like to build sculpture a mile high based on the most tenuous and delicate of intuitions.

Isaac Witkin

I have attempted in this work to employ a spiral format that will draw the onlooker around it to experience an evolving dynamic in a fully spatial sense.

The two arabesque rhythms meet overhead with a "spark-plug" connection to close the circuit of the up-and-down flowing movement.

The sculpture relates to the ground in two different ways—on it and through it, and the scale is crucial in setting up the correct physical relationship to the viewer.

Color is used to balance the relative weights of the units and to emphasize the rhythmic structure of the work.

"PRIMARY STRUCTURES"—THE NEW ANONYMITY

Hilton Kramer

The New York Times, 1 May 1966

Certain exhibitions usher us into the present in easy stages, educating our sensibilities to new and unexpected alternatives by means of a careful expository logic that adjusts our expectations to each of the aesthetic and historical shocks that awaits us. This is not the case with the new show called "Primary Structures," which opened this week at the Jewish Museum, Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street. Here the transition from past—even the very recent past—to present is abrupt and precipitous. Confronting the multitude of objects that comprise this exhibition, there is no mistaking the fact that we are in a realm of feeling and of ideas utterly removed from the pieties and assumptions that have governed a good deal of Modern art. Everything about the works of art included here—their scale, their materials, their radical renunciations—is a reminder that a new aesthetic era is upon us.

In calling the exhibition "Primary Structures," the museum's Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Kynaston McShine, who organized the show, discreetly refuses to identify it as a survey of sculpture. And there is good reason for this discretion: so much of the work has such marked affinities with painting and architecture that, at first glance anyway, its strict sculptural identity seems blurred. But only at first glance, I think. This is, for better or worse, an exhibition of new sculpture, and its interest lies in the way it defines the new sculptural aesthetics.

Fundamental to this new aesthetics is an attitude of detachment and impersonality—an attitude that finds its proper expression in forms and materials that do not require the intervention of the artist's hand; that may, in fact, be best executed by mechanical means that do not permit the artist's hand to play any role whatever. Many of the artists included in the exhibition actually do construct and paint or otherwise finish their work themselves, but the sculptural imagery they aspire to does not require them to do so. Their aims can be carried out so much better by workers professionally trained for the task. As Mr. McShine observes in his introduction to the catalog, the sculptor can "now conceive his work, and entrust its execution to a manufacturer whose precision and skill convey the standardized 'impersonality' that the artist may seek."

In order to realize sculpture on this order, form must adhere to an extreme simplicity and regularity: geometricity will naturally be favored. The materials employed must be of an extreme anonymity: painted flat wood surfaces are widely used, and sheet metal, too, but the new industrially produced plastics, being even more impersonal than the most slickly painted surface, are clearly superior for the end in view. For what these new sculptors desire above all is to have their conceptions embodied in a physical object that will function as an expressive visual statement while remaining completely barren of all subjective involvement.

There are forty-two American and British sculptors included in the "Primary Structures" exhibition—most of them young and little known to the general public—and not all of them succeed in adhering to this impersonal ideal.

What remains important—what, indeed, assumes the greatest importance—are the logistics of form itself. There are sculptural precedents for what the new sculptors are doing—precedents to be found in the work of Naum Gabo and Georges Vantongerloo and Max Bill, in Alexander Calder and David Smith and Louise Nevelson—but these are less immediately relevant than the inspiration that has been drawn from recent painting. In particular, hard-edge and color field painting quite dominate both the way color is used and the physical scale of the structures themselves. One might say that the new sculpture is, in effect, a species of abstract painting aspiring to the condition of architecture: it is sculpture only because the sculptural medium is the sole means by which this aspiration can be realized.

If one turns from the overall aesthetics of the "Primary Structures" show to the individual works that make it up, one cannot help feeling that this is an exhibition stronger and more interesting in its general principles than in its specific accomplishments. A good many works engage one's interest as demonstrations of theoretical possibilities, but then fail to sustain one's attention as expressive entities in their own right. I cannot recall another exhibition of contemporary art that has, to the same extent, left me feeling so completely that I had not so much encountered works of art as taken a course in them. One is enlightened, but rarely moved.

[...] But there can be no question about the fact that [McShine] has given us, whatever its failings and however one may quarrel with its aesthetic conclusions, one of those exhibitions that defines a period and fixes it irrevocably in one's consciousness.

THE NEW SCULPTURE

Mark di Suvero, Donald Judd, Kynaston McShine, Robert Morris, Barbara Rose
Symposium on "The New Sculpture," New York, 2 May 1966 (from Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.)

BARBARA ROSE: I wanted to explain the appropriateness of the participation of Robert Morris, Donald Judd, and Mark di Suvero in this symposium. They were among the first to establish and make explicit new positions in sculpture that made possible some of the developments this show has focused upon. In Di Suvero's work there is a kind of dynamic tension of structural relationships and a directness of impact that have influenced many young sculptors, particularly those in the Park Place group. Morris was one of, if not the first, to use simple unitary volumes rather than to make sculpture that depended on a relationship of parts. Several works in the show by other artists derive directly from prototypes he executed in plywood from 1961 to 1965, which were exhibited at the Green Gallery and widely reproduced in photographs. In these works, he used the room as a general environment for works that related to floor, wall, and ceiling in unprecedented ways. Judd was among the first to use identical or repeated elements and to work with mathematical sequences, particularly those extendable to infinity. Like Morris, he, too, used simple volumes and nonrelational composition. I think it is important to point out how these three artists developed precedents that prepared the way for the kind of work we're seeing now. Di Suvero's work, although more romantic than the sculpture in the show, must be counted as part of the general context in which it developed. And on that score, I want to ask Mark whether he agrees with Hilton Kramer that the new sculpture is anonymous and impersonal, and whether he finds this objectionable, since it is an aesthetic position opposed to his work.

MARK DI SUVERO: I think "Primary Structures" is the key show of the 1960s, and that it has introduced a new generation of artists. As for whether the work is anonymous, all work is anonymous that doesn't have any name. Some of it is beautiful. The Ron Bladen, for example, is a great piece. It expands our idea of scale and really changes our knowledge of space. Some of the work presents itself as manufactured object, and the very sense of objectness eliminates it from what I think is the most crucial part of modern sculpture. I think that my friend Don Judd can't qualify as an artist because he doesn't do the work. And there is more and more of this kind of thing, which to my mind is the negation of the object by making an object. But this is not grappling with the essential fact that a man has to make a thing in order to be an artist. As far as I'm concerned, those works that give me that sense of radiance that I find I need in a work are those that have been actually worked over by an artist. I think that all those pointed-up bronzes, the pointed-up marbles, the expanded bronzes from the casts, are meaningless.

DONALD JUDD: Now wait a minute. The point is not whether one makes a work oneself or not. The point is that it's all a case of technique that makes the thing visible, so that I don't see in the long run why one technique is any more essentially art than another technique. And there are presumably an infinite number of techniques. I don't see why someone shouldn't go out and find the one that suits him, whether or not it conforms to the manipulatory technique that's been going on for some time or to a new one.

ROSE: Here is the crucial question: whether an abstract aesthetic conception that may be manufactured or fabricated is as much art as the personal manipulation of materials. I think the heart of most of the objections to the new work is that people feel that since they can't see the artist's fingerprints, it's not a personal statement.

ROBERT MORRIS: I think that's a ridiculous issue, and I don't think whether you fabricate it yourself or have somebody fabricate it for you has anything to do with making art. My interest is in having the work as well executed as possible [...]

JUDD: Mark is defining space as something that is moved by the forms. If it isn't moved, if it's static, then, according to his definition, it isn't really space. But that space that is shifted around or activated in one way or another is not what interests me.

DI SUVERO. The people who change space through a new sense of scale are the ones I dig the most. Giacometti certainly does it, although he has to use the figure. But he actually changes the size of the space.

JUDD: I hate that kind of space and purposely avoid it, because it's an anthropomorphic kind of space. [...]

ROSE. To go on to another point, Hilton Kramer listed what he believes were the precedents for the new sculpture in the works of the Constructivists, Naum Gabo, Georges Vantongerloo, Alexander Calder, David Smith, and Louise Nevelson. I don't agree that their work has any kind of direct relationship to the new sculpture, except perhaps in the scale of Calder's and Smith's works or in their relative simplicity. The roots of the new work, it seems to me, lie more specifically in painting, in that it grows out of a dissatisfaction with the limitations of painting. I know, for example, that Don and Bob were both originally painters. Let me ask you then, why did you stop painting and start making sculpture?

MORRIS: I couldn't say. I stopped painting and I didn't do anything for two years and then I started making sculpture. So I don't feel that there's any connection between the two.

JUDD: I became very tired of several major aspects of painting and felt that I couldn't do anything I would ever like with any of them. In the first place, I was tired of the fact that it's a rectangle, and in the second, that it's so many inches from the wall, and that no matter what you do you have to put something within the shape of the canvas. For example, if you put a series of circles within the canvas, that leaves all that border around the circles. On the other hand, if you decide you want to emphasize the rectangularity of the canvas, then you have to use elements that enforce it, that is, correspond to the edges in some way. That really leaves you no choice. And also, paintings are invariably canvas. And I'm very tired of that particular surface, and

of oil paint too. So it seemed a good thing to give up. Painting seemed very restricted. No matter what you did you couldn't make it strong enough and clear enough. So there was nothing to do but quit on it. Apropos of sculpture, I never took sculpture as a model, although I was impressed, not influenced exactly, but pushed somewhat by quite a few people, for example by Lee Bontecou and John Chamberlain, who at one time I thought did stronger work than I could possibly do. And one of the reasons I stopped painting at the same time was that Oldenburg's work was much stronger than anything I could possibly make in a painting. So the new developments in sculpture don't exactly amount to a revolution. It didn't come overnight, I think it's had a pretty normal development. And you don't want to get saddled with a lot of people who are supposed to have influenced you who didn't influence you. For example, even though I admired Smith's work, I never seriously considered it as an influence. But Kramer mentions that Smith's last show was an influence. Now chronologically that's impossible, because it was last year, and everybody was pretty well along in what they were doing by then, so Smith's late pieces could not have been an influence. In fact, sculpture always looked archaic to me. It always had the kind of space Mark talked about, and it always had related forms and a certain hierarchy of parts—the major part, the minor part, and so forth. These were things I wasn't interested in and which I certainly was trying to get away from in painting.

ROSE: But that's what I mean about painting being a primary source for a number of the ideas in the new sculpture. For example, the elimination of internal compositional relationships was accomplished in painting by Pollock and Newman. That is why I feel the antecedents for the new sculpture can be found in painting rather than in sculpture.

JUDD: Yes, but I'd say at least for myself that those antecedents are extremely general, and that they mostly concern scale. Almost everybody assumes that broad scale is desirable now. Nearly all the best works have it.

PRIMARY STRUCTURES

Mel Bochner

Arts Magazine, June 1966

"[...] there is nothing behind these surfaces, no inside, no secret, no hidden motive."
Alain Robbe-Grillet, For a New Novel.

"Primary Structures" is a misnomer for an important exhibition at the Jewish Museum (29 April–12 June). A qualifying addition to the title is "Sculpture by Younger British and American Sculptors." This subtitle reveals most strikingly the extent of misunderstanding about the new art. The best work in this exhibition is not sculpture. In this exhibition the best work is by Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt, Don Judd, Robert Morris, Robert Smithson. The addition of "dilutants" and mannerists to this exhibition (in the name, no doubt, of a "good show") does not dissolve the issues the best work raises. In this exhibition, sculptors, such as the Park Place group, the Richard Feigen group, and the Pace Gallery group, are seen to be manipulating streamlined versions of outmoded forms. They may be dismissed in a discussion of new art.

The work of the six artists named above demands a new critical vocabulary. The common criticism of their art is in a language without pertinence. Its only accomplishment is to separate the viewer from the object of his sight. Such words as form, content, tradition, classic, romantic, expressive, experiment, psychology, analogy, depth, purity, feeling, space, avant-garde, lyric, individual, composition, life and death, sexuality, biomorphic, biographic—the entire language of botany in art—can now be regarded as suspect. These words are not tools for probing out aspects of a system of moralistic restriction. The anchor of this system is dread. The result of this system is the condemnation of the most intense art of the present as "cool," "minimal," "reduced."

When Robert Smithson writes about his piece *The Cryosphere* for the catalog, he lists the number of elements, their modular sequence, and the chemical composition of his spray-paint can. He strips away the romance about making a work of art. "Art mystics" find this particularly offensive. Carl Andre's Lever is a 30 foot (915 cm) row of firebricks laid side to side on the floor. He ordered them and placed them. He demythologizes the artist's function. Don Judd's two *Untitled* (1966) 40 x 190 x 40 inch (102 x 483 x 102 cm) galvanized iron and aluminim pieces are exactly alike. One hangs on the wall. The aluminum bar across the top front edge is not sprayed. The second piece sits on the floor directly in front of the

first. The aluminum bar across the top front edge is sprayed blue. Their only enigma is their existence. "Art-existentialists" find this particularly distressing. Dan Flavin's *monument 4 those who have been killed in ambush (to P.K. who reminded me about death)* is an arrangement of four red fluorescent lights 192 inch (488 cm) wide, set in the corner at a height of 66 inch (168 cm). Sol LeWitt's 72 x 72 x 72 inch (183 x 183 x 183 cm) painted-wood grid cube is an axial, symmetrical, open and closed. Robert Morris's two large identical L-shaped pieces neither organize, divide, nor articulate "space." "Space-artists" find this particularly disappointing.

It will not do good to call this work "anti-art." Don Judd says in his catalog statement, "If someone says his work is art, it's art." The definitions are phenomenological. Even the definitions are phenomena.

What these artists hold in common is the attitude that art—from the root artificial—is unreal, constructed, invented, predetermined, intellectual, make-believe, objective, contrived, useless. Their work is dumb in the sense that it does not "speak to you," yet subversive in that it points to the probable end of all Renaissance values. It is against comfortable aesthetic experience. It is a provocative art as distant from the humanistic stammering of Abstract Expressionism, Happenings, and Pop Art as it is from the decorative subterfuges of the Louis Noland school. But what is ultimately most difficult for the art viewer of good faith to accept is the non-visuality—a concept at odds with all previous ideas of the art experience. Old art attempted to make the non-visible (energy, feelings) visual (marks). The new

art is attempting to make the non visual (mathematics) visible (concrete). Invisibility is an element.

For Judd and Smithson, there is no dichotomy between art and science. They are aware of the artistic potentialities of new math, are knowledgeable in mineralogy and crystal structure, concerned with advances in paint chemistry, and capable of adapting aspects of modern technology to their ends. All these artists are concerned with standardization. The components of a piece are usually all the same. An art of units. Judd uses set theory in the complex sequences of his modules. Divisions are solidified. LeWitt accomplishes something similar. The areas between Smithson's units are invisible modules. The sequence is 010010010010010010. Invisibility is an object.

There is no work or craftsmanship. Flavin's lights or Andre's bricks can be duplicated by anyone in his own home. The more complicated structures conceived by the artists are executed by metal shops. This further objectifies the result by placing an intermediary between the artist and the work. The artist is an object.

The new art of Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt, Don Judd, Robert Morris, Robert Smithson deals with the surface of matter and avoids its "heart." It is un-lifelike, not spontaneous, exclusive. It does not move. This is not an "art-style." It will not "wither" with the passing season and go away. It is not engineering. It is not appliances. It is not faceless and impersonal. It will not become academic. It offers no outline or formula. It denies everything it asserts. The implications are astounding. Art no longer need pretend to be about life. Inhibitions, dogmas, and anxieties of nineteenth-century romance disappear. Art is, after all, nothing.

OBJECT, STRUCTURE OR SCULPTURE: WHERE ARE WE?

Corrine Robins

Arts, September–October 1966

"The zowiest fashion extravaganza in town," according to *The New York Times*, thousands of people, TV cameras, the press hard at work. April 26, the "Primary Structures" exhibition opened at the Jewish Museum, pieces by forty-two younger British and American artists in the new form that seems to have superseded painting. A social and artistic event comparable only to the Armory Show half a century before. Hilton Kramer in *The Times* acknowledged the importance of the show as "the first comprehensive glimpse of a style that promises—or perhaps one should say threatens—to become our period style." Kramer, refusing to deal with individual pieces, notes about one of the few names, that "the best of the sculptors—in this case, Anthony Caro—tend to be swamped by the presence of so many lesser figures." To add to the confusion, he treats the new three-dimensional work as a single movement, an art style. The publicity pictures and releases continue. The importance of the show is never questioned. A few ideas about Minimal art inspired by the inclusion of five or six Minimal artists are trotted out almost in desperation. And then silence. No one wants to talk about the works.

The semi-intellectual dissertations that followed contained exhaustive lists of what the new works are not, lists that themselves become a commentary on our primarily verbal, non visual culture. (See, for example, Mel Bochner's article in the June edition of *Arts*.) There will, of course, always be words to say what something isn't. For the art writer, this is a kind of easy way out: an apparent effort at clarity, which consumes space and clouds specific issues raised by the pieces themselves. Don Judd describes such negative characteristics as "glib." And certainly it seems antipathetic toward the boned-down works themselves.

[...] Forty-two artists is an awesome number. The big sweeping forms of Bladen and Grosvenor cast a long shadow. Structuralists and object-makers suddenly abound: artists building up and out. "How do you make the inside the outside? The engine, the scaffold, the weight—the energy? Ronald Bladen puts his artist's statement in the form of a question. Robert Morris painfully attempts to explain his aims within the limits he has set for himself. Sal Romano says flatly, "I don't think artists should talk about their work because nine out of ten times the talk has very little to do with what they are doing." The very men whose pieces profit (receive publicity) from being so-named protest the label of Minimal artist, protest all easy verbal escapes, seeing such terms as preconceived ideas that prevent direct confrontation with their art itself. The new art is not an escape from the three-dimensional world we live in: something that can exist apart in our minds or hang unobtrusive, almost invisible, on the wall. Three-dimensional works above all take up space, use it, and make us aware there is a ground or floor upon which we are walking, a ceiling or sky above. Their emotional impact varies from artist to artist. But by their very physicality, the three-dimensional forms bespeak an art of force, of power, of things existing concretely. Irving Sandler's term "Concrete Expressionism" would almost pin down one of the new movements, fix it with a name. The name fails because structure is structure, standing for itself. One recalls Stonehenge, the Aztec pyramids, sun disks, various ancient tombs that strike us dumb a moment. We have returned to the presence and mystery of form. Having been overexposed to the meaningless fast images, picture-word flashes, the broken gestures stopped in air by yet another word, we see quickly and without feeling, making rapid associations at the expense of experience to the extent where we don't see at all: we read, do interpretations. While the best of the new three-dimensional works may involve all the latest materials, they provide very little diversion. Instead, they demand time: we must stop and feel, walk slowly around and sometimes even move out of their way. They live in the space that is also our space, are something built, constructed, made. They are here, the concrete voice of a new generation, and will not easily be talked away.

04

EXHIBITION

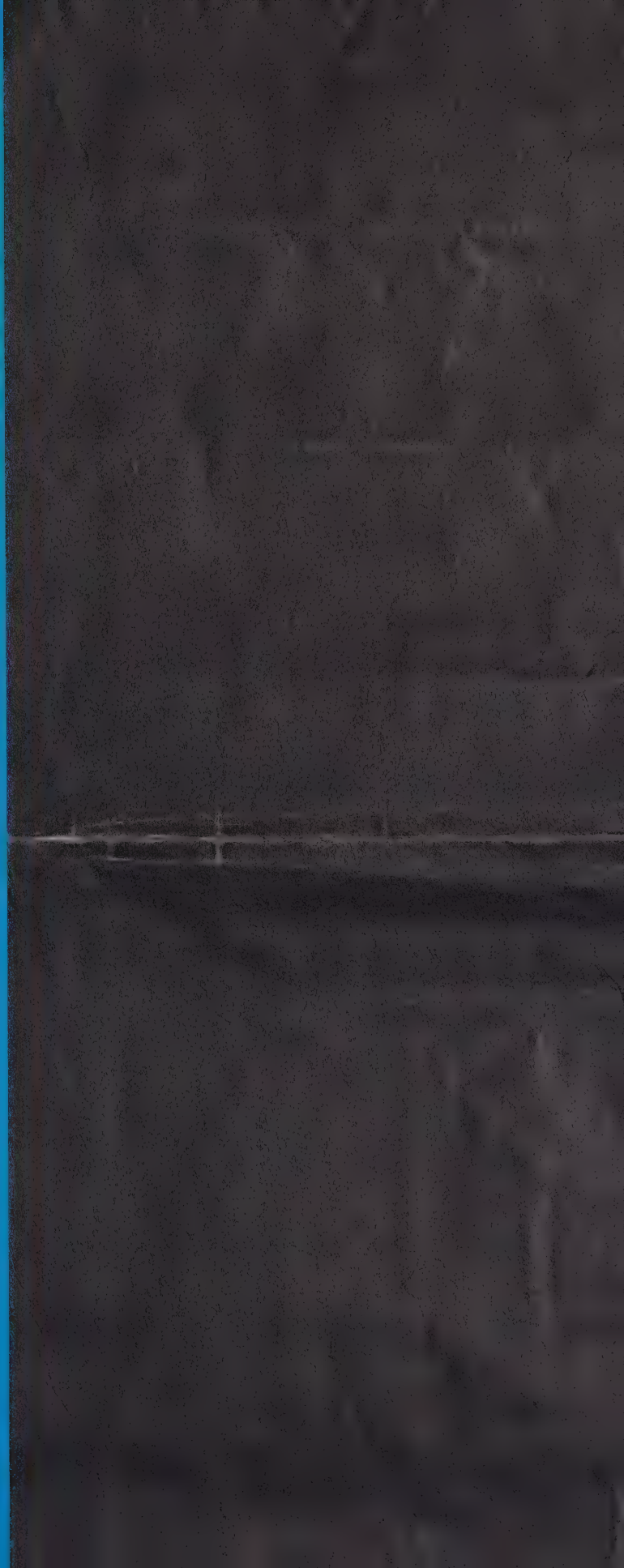
Arte Povera + Azioni Povere

LOCATION

Amalfi town, Arsenale, and surrounding area

DATE

4–6 October 1968



CURATOR
Germano Celant

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Giovanni Anselmo, Alighiero Boetti, Anne-Marie Boutit, Riccardo Camoni, Carlo Colnaghi, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Luciano Fabro, Paolo Icaro, Jannis Kounellis, Pietro Lista, Richard Long, Gino Marotta, Mimmo Martelli, Mario Merz, Marisa Merz, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali, Gianni Piacentino, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Gilberto Zorio, "I Giusti della Zoo" /Ableo, Henry Martin, Marisa Merz, Michelangelo Pistoletto

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Arte Povera più Azioni Povere. Salerno-Roma editore, 1969. Essays by Giovanni Maria Accame, Giuseppe Bartolucci, Vittorio Boarini, Pietro Bonfiglioli, Achille Bonito Oliva, Germano Celant, Gillo Dorfles, Piero Gilardi, Henry Martin, Filiberto Menna, Daniela Palazzoli, Carmelo Pazzali, Angelo Trimarco, Tommaso Trini, Lo Zoo

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 29
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

While Arte Povera is associated with sculpture made from non-standard, non-precious materials, the title of the Third Amalfi Exhibition (RA3), "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere"—meaning "Poor Art and Poor Actions"—suggests something broader. This multi-day happening gave equal status to objects and to process and performance, and it prioritized interaction and discussion among artists and with critics. The event also included participants from Northern Europe, pointing to a larger international network within which Italian artists increasingly would circulate.

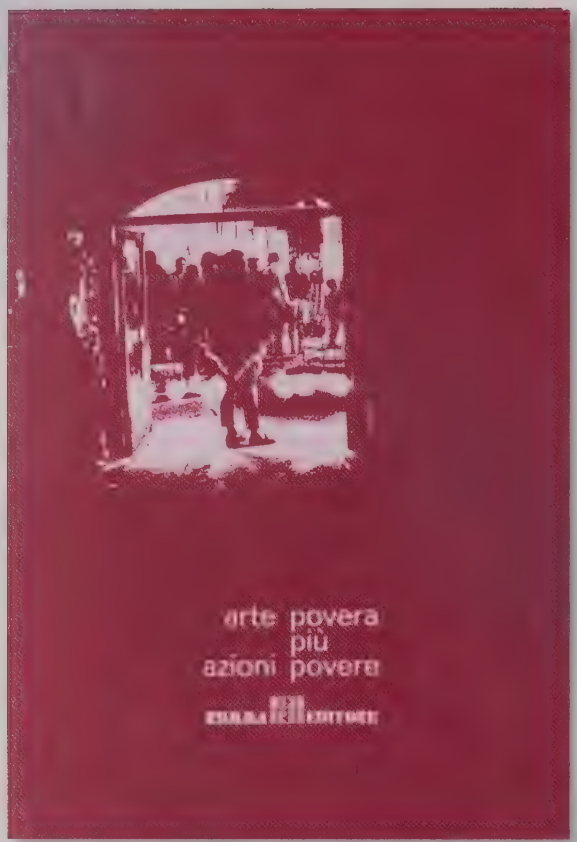
Held in a seaside resort town southeast of Naples, the exhibition was organized and funded by publisher and collector Marcello Rumma. Rumma asked the critic Germano Celant to curate the show, for over the past two years Celant had written about and assembled exhibitions of the artistic work he had named "Arte Povera." As suggested by the subtitle of his essay "Arte Povera: Notes for a Guerrilla War," he interpreted the Italian artists' use of "poor materials" as anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist. But Celant's thinking went beyond the politics of materials, for he derived the term from the "Poor Theater" of Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, and he began his second major essay on Arte Povera by quoting the Living Theater.

The extended weekend event at Amalfi anticipated the workshop approach employed by Harald Szeemann the next year in "When Attitudes Become Form," bringing artists to a site at which they created their works and where their personal interaction was an important part of the process. On Thursday, most of the artists arrived and began arranging the works, or assembling their materials into works, in the two vaulted aisles of the old stone Arsenal. Construction continued on Friday, and by the time the show opened officially on Saturday, Italian artists had filled the space with both individual objects and dispersed installations. Most of the artists installed their own pieces, but local rivalry led those from Rome to send works to be put in place by others.

The contributions of the foreign artists were more performative, and on Friday two of them moved into the environs to realize their projects. Richard Long from England carried two white pieces of wood to the top of the mountain overlooking Amalfi, installing a vertical 12-foot (3.6 meter) line to be viewed from the town. On Saturday, he created his second piece, which was to shake hands with strangers in the piazza. Dutch artist Jan Dibbets made another white line, anchoring a rope under water that extended horizontally from the rocky shore. Long and Dibbets had come to Celant's attention through Piero Gilardi, who was developing a view of exhibitions as places of artistic community rather than as sites of commodity display. Gilardi also introduced another Dutch artist, Ger van Elk, who on Saturday swept the Arsenal floor and glued the sweepings in a circle.

Italian artists also contributed to the performative dimension of the weekend with, among much else, Gino Marotta building hay-bale structures in the town center and Paolo Icaro inconspicuously repairing the damaged corner of a building. But the most well-known event, filmed by Italian television, was fully theatrical. On Friday evening, Michelangelo Pistoletto's troupe of players, Lo Zoo, marched through Amalfi to the piazza and presented *The Trained Man*, with critic Henry Martin as the title character.

The critics who came for the weekend concluded the event on Sunday with a group discussion. But they played a more important role through conversations taking place among the works and around the town. Amalfi that weekend was more than a site of exhibition and performance for the passive spectator. As an active place of art-making and interpersonal communication, it was an important experiment in process-based exhibitionary practice.



←← Catalog cover, *Arte Povera più Azioni Povere*, published by Rumma editore in 1969. Publisher Marcello Rumma helped fund and organize the exhibition (with Germano Celant), and took part in a number of events.

↙↙ View of the Arsenale. On the floor in the center of the image is Mario Merz's *Sit-in*, a metal-framed box on top of which sits gauze covered in beeswax and a neon sign spelling out the words in the title. Behind this is Luciano Fabro's *Half Mirror Half Transparent* (*Cristallo mezzo specchiato mezzo trasparente*). The conical wicker basket to the right is Mario Merz's *Hamper*, inside of which is a pot of boiling beans. Merz made up to three versions of this wicker cone piece, which were shown at exhibitions including "Prospect 68", Stadtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, September 1968. His *Sit-In* would also be shown at Harald Szeemann's "When Attitudes Become Form," Kunsthalle Bern, 1969 (see p. 97).

← Michaelangelo Pistoletto's installation *Tenda di Lampadine* at the Arsenale. Pistoletto also exhibited his works *Mappamundo*, *Candele* and *Monumentino*.

↓ View of the Arsenale, with visitors looking at Mario Merz's *Sit-In* (center) and *Hamper* (right).

← Pino Pascali's *Blue Widow* installed in the Arsenale. The photograph, by Claudio Abate, would feature in a report on "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere" published in *Domus* and written by Tommaso Trini.

→ Alighiero Boetti's *Shaman Showman* installation at the Arsenale.

↓ Critics and participants gathered in the Arsenale. The speaker on the left in the white shirt is Filiberto Menna; to his right are Germano Celant, Achille Bonito Oliva, and Tommaso Trini. Behind them, also in a white shirt and bearded, is Marcello Rumma.

→ Maria Pioppi parades with a kitten during the performance of Lo Zoo's *The Trained Man*, a satire of the middle-class social order and the entertainment industry. On the first two nights of the exhibition, the troupe paraded into the Arsenale to encourage artists, critics, and bystanders to follow them out to the town's main square, where they presented their spectacle.

→→ Gianni Piacentino with his *Black-Violet Marbled Object with Handrails*.

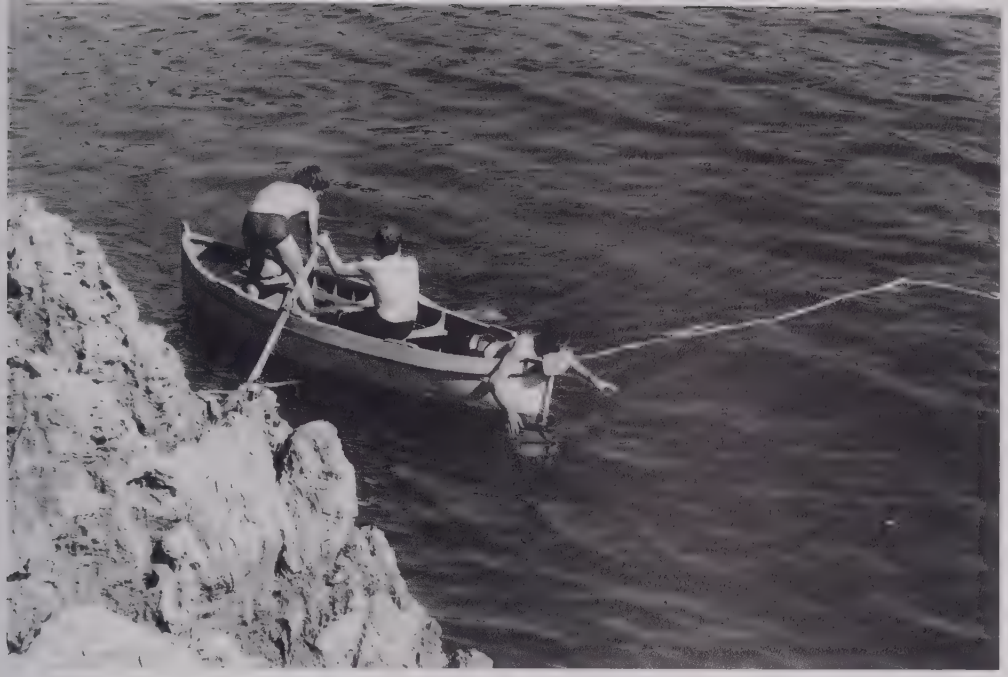
→ Soccer match inside the Arsenale, with (from left) Richard Long (wearing a shirt from Saint Martin's School of Art, London), Emilio Prini, Ger van Elk, and Jan Dibbets.

→→ An "action" at the beach.

↓ Ger van Elk's "action," in which he poured glue onto the floor and then dropped trash on it.

↘ Pietro Lista and Albio taking part in a ceremony uncovering a light buried in the beach sands.

↘↘ Richard Long's "action," in which he shook hands with passersby.



↗ Jan Dibbet and helpers setting up *A White Line of Wooden Poles*, which was submerged 10 inches (25 cm) under the surface of the sea.

→ Jan Dibbet's work, *A White Line of Wooden Poles*.

→ Setting up Gino Marotta's "action" on the street in Amalfi.

→→ "Action" in Amalfi's main square, with Gino Marotta, Henry Martin, Valeria Ferrara, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Carlo Colnaghi, and Ger van Elk.

↓ Gino Marotta's street "action."

AZIONE POVERA, 1968

Germano Celant

Arte Povera più Azioni Povere
[exh. cat.], 1968

Initially, in the years 1966–67, there was an incentive to verify one's degree of existence and the contribution of one's being. It was an attempt to project and recover what had been repressed, a necessity to build objects that would reflect the self and focus the osmotic relation between thought and matter, intuition and construction. It was a movement along the parallel tracks of art and life in search of an intermediate value. Today it is the need to identify oneself with ongoing actions and processes, a tendency to activate the psychophysical dimension of factual and mental behavior to escape the utilization of originated products and the created objects. It is an effort to undo objectual integration in order to free factual experimentation from alienation to and from the object. Instead of trying to think and fix, perceive and present, feel and block sensation, materializing it in an object that adds energy to the system, it endeavors to act and to remove energy, mixing with reality by way of the body and the mental dimension until total cancellation is reached. It is a search, therefore, for vital and dialectic relations with reality, and a rejection of reassuring formulas and details that respond to the expectations of the system and of the technological intellectual—a rejection of being as exposure to something other than oneself by means of a complete osmosis between action and body, thought and body, energy and the individual, immediate consumption of the critical-aesthetic event, directly placed outside consumption and direct passage from Arte Povera to Azione Povera.

Artists and critics today seem no longer to believe in the moralism of the object. They believe instead in the extreme morality of their own deeds and actions. Indeed, they reach the point where they cancel themselves in facts and succumb dramatically before social reality, which is more pressing and present than the reality of art.

Thus attention is shifting towards contingent actions that disdain all forms of apology for the object. Critico-aesthetic activity is being translated into free and revolutionary action that dissolves imitation, refuses an extension of the object and its embodiment in additional and productive presentations, and involves acts that can be only critico-political. A choice is being made in favor of the socio-political integration of work with the aim of eliminating genre and traditional divisions that undermine the revolutionary and propulsive charge.

Actions are becoming contingent, phonic, and written. They leave no usable or exploitable trace. They no longer last as objects, but occur as varied and continuously changing episodes, as an acceleration and expansion of operative practice that follows the thrust and stimuli of the "whole moment," a spontaneously organized anarchy that upsets determined, planned needs, which dissolves equilibrium in favor of a spontaneity that creates an identity between modifier and modified action, without permitting this spontaneity to fall back into the realm of what has already been acquired, or of what can be acquired.

In this way, life is becoming a continuous tableau vivant through which one suggests not "the synthesis of what one remembers and what one sees" and a material representation of thought, but a possible sociocultural strategy in which revolutionary and gnosiological processes shatter the system of industrial dictatorship. Today, in fact, the daily context is a "stage" on which intellectuals, students, and workers "act," uprooted and isolated, as yet devoid of emotive pressure on reality. The only possibility of life seems to be theater—that is, the relation between the actor (the striking worker, the student who burns cars, builds barricades, and the intellectual who collaborates with both) and the world as a whole [...]

L'ESPERIENZA DI AMALFI, 1968

Piero Gilardi

Arte Povera più Azioni Povere
[exh. cat.], 1968

THE WORK

On the evening of Thursday, 3 October, most of the artists invited to the third international show of figurative art in Amalfi were out in the square waiting for the two trucks that were bringing their works. The trucks arrived much later than expected but the task of unloading them was almost an entertainment; when they left for dinner, the artists agreed to come and unpack and install their pieces the following morning at ten.

In truth, that task of installing the work could in itself represent an "action," were it not for the individual neuroses that unfailingly grip artists when they are concerned with actually installing work. Boetti had set himself up at the entrance and was gathering some thirty-odd gadgets and samples of material, all labeled by his gallery, inside a square of white cloth stretched out on the floor; farther on Piacentino was painstakingly undoing the twisted tape tying up his structures; Pistoletto and Colnaghi were dressing up an ancient sarcophagus with commercially manufactured bales of multicolored rags.

In the second aisle Zorio, was filling a round basin with fluorinated water, while Anselmo, with his usual calm tension, was laying a wet sheet on the floor and then with a cylinder containing a compass was splitting it crosswise in a northerly direction: the inertness of the wet cloth turned his gestures into a crystallized image; Martelli was in a corner setting up a strange composition of floor tiles, glass vases, and green lamps.

Other artists arrived in the afternoon. Fabro came and hung up a geographical outline of Italy with steel cable; Paolini simply mounted a panel on the back wall with names woven in such a way as to be indecipherable unless you knew them; Merz filled a net container with wax and in it placed the neon sign *Sit-in* that melted the wax, making it drip through in a thin stream along the sloping floor of the second aisle. On the evening of

Friday, 4 October, the last of the invited artists arrived, except for those from the Roman group, who were ideologically at odds with the show. That evening, too, arrangements were agreed to get the necessary materials for those who wanted to install objects in the landscape or carry out actions.

[Richard] Long climbed the little mountain behind the town and set a white pole atop it; then as a second work, he wore a sweater in the colors of St. Martin's School of Art, went into the square, and shook hands with some twenty-odd people picked at random from those gathered around.

[Jan] Dibbets left the town in a boat, going off to put a 33-foot (10-meter) white line across an inlet between the rocks; from the main road people got a bird's-eye view of the line which, beneath the surface of the water, appeared illusively and dynamically distorted.

On the Saturday the actions intensified. The expectations of both public and participants had grown and the photographers for the catalog were all on edge as they kept a lookout for the slightest initiative that seemed to be an action.

Camoni went on to one of the privately run beaches and "smoothed out" a rectangle of sand measuring some 1,000 square feet (100 square meters); in the square Marotta set up and dismantled constructions from bales of straw; at the Arsenal van Elk poured vinavil (acetate glue) in a circle marked out on the ground and then into it swept all the little bits of garbage raked together from a few yards around it.

At 7 p.m. Pistoletto's "minstrel" show began. The players left: to wander the town's picturesque narrow streets, ending up in a particular small square with a great following of children and locals; the performance of the "tamed man" took place beneath the television spotlights, with Henry Martin's impressive interpretation of a man to be trained.

That same evening an audience was gathered on the darkened beach to watch the discovery of a lit neon light covered in sand at the waterline by Pietro Lista. By the next morning, Sunday, expectations had subsided and there were some, like Icaro, who chose that quieter moment to carry out his action in virtual anonymity—simply rebuilding the chipped comer of a house on the square. Finally Anne-Marie, Boetti's wife, used sheets of polystyrene taken from her husband's stand to "sew" a flimsy raft, which was then left at sea for bathers to play with.

The only "group" action prompted by improvised understanding among the participants was when they played ball in the square and later at the Arsenal, on the area of Pistoletto's installation; an action that provoked misunderstandings and disputes. This was the disagreeable confirmation of the fact that freedom of creative action is still something separate from the physical space of representation, which is still subject to a form of individual property [...]

AGAINST THE SOLITUDE OF OBJECTS

Achille Bonito Oliva

Arte Povera più Azioni Povere
[exh. cat.], 1968

The consumer riverbed where the neo-capitalist system ebbs and flows has undergone a process of ontologization so intense that it now appears as the only home for society. It absorbs all possible intersubjective relations as sublimation and false rejection of the objectifying structure of reality, which moves along under the constant impetus of alienation and the debasing mechanism of trade. [...]

Initially, the artist and his work are also immersed in this politico-existential falsehood. It is objectified in a network of functions, and the work is devoid of a clear intention of integration or subversion. It is swallowed up by the market and changed into a commodity thanks to the traditional channel of propagation, the gallery. In this privileged space, the aesthetic object takes on a connotation of privilege that augments its desirability. Thus, an exhibition, instead of constituting the practicing space of a cultural community, intensifies a loss of meaning in the work and lowers the work to the status of a commodity among commodities. Consequently, the system tends to keep art in an elaborate cage where the aesthetic operation is carried to completion. And the operation has to take on the linguistic specification as its only field of practice and formation. In this way, society has the tendency to preserve the notion of the avant-garde, a concept that is now innocuous to the extent that it guarantees (for the system) that art is a sequence of languages in historical development, without links (except metaphorical ones) with reality. The system thus tends to constitute a closed metabolism for art, a Darwinian metabolism in which the aesthetic product descends from linguistic ancestors that have been shaped and modified over time.

To this aseptic and specialist notion of the avant-garde the artist answers back with a more comprehensive operation that does not produce languages alone, but tends to recover the individual will and imagination as the means by which his aesthetic-formative whim may design a landscape of more meaningful objects. The new objects propose a renewed trace of subjectivity in the work, which no longer appears as a closed system of signs, but as an elaborate lifebed of new meaning, specifically the meaning of doing as anthropological reconstruction of the psychosomatic apparatus of man.

Thus, the artist sets forth a notion of the avant-garde that is more comprehensive, which affirms itself as a form of behavior that totalizes the individual personality. To do this, the artist demands complete availability, a total freedom that allows him to propose a humanization of the subject by using any image and any material in the world. He shows a voracity that is directly proportional to the speed with which the system threatens him. Hence he incessantly builds objects and symptoms of objects, and he accumulates the outward signs of his individual approach and of the new procedure he pioneers. [...]

RAPPORTO DI AMALFI. UN INCONTRO DI ARTISTI E CRITICI 'ARTE POVERA AZIONE POVERE'

Tommaso Trini

Domus, November 1968

Now in its third year, Amalfi is no longer the informative vehicle it used to be, no matter how specialized or advanced it is. In 1966 and 1967, it was the catalyst for an artistic awakening in southern Italy. From Calvesi to Boatto, Barilli and Menna, the best critics were there to discuss images and space, from Arte Povera to Environmental Art. Critical discussion was directed toward an adequate display of artworks. Flexible like all the peripheral, non-bureaucratic events, the exhibition in Amalfi meeting was modeled this year on the new values of experience and political-cultural action. From these three days of artistic production, we can draw a few brief conclusions. [...]

AVAILABLE

Amalfi hasn't invented anything, but it has the merit of providing a primal experience for that area in visual art that is closer to the idea of total art, of culture as global engagement. So who is make themselves available? First of all, the event, which successfully avoided the officiality of a critical symposium; then, its organizer, Marcello Rumma, who supported it financially, with no commercial interests; Germano Celant himself, who curated the exhibition focusing on what he defines as "Arte Povera," but who categorically refused to use the name; and then the artists. A few of those came all the way from London and Amsterdam. They have never been so accessible before, and expressed a more or less open disdain only for critics like Dorfles, who was present but not particularly involved, or for some Marxist intellectuals. These artists are not even particularly easy on the younger critics. We are faced with the criticism of an art that is presented as a critical form in itself. Some of the artists and critics invited claimed that the meeting was doomed by personal vendettas and authoritarian positions. These might be the result of organizational flaws, but they were evident. Their absence made the dialog between artists and critics a fiasco.

THE EXHIBITION

Installed in the old Arsenale, the exhibition offered a remarkable body of works and experiences about new materials, the artwork as chemical and physical process, and the participation of the audience. The list of artists included Pistoletto, Boetti, Zorio, Merz, and Anselmo, Piacentino, and Paolini from Turin; Pascali and Kounellis from Rome; Fabro from Milan. Calzolari and Prini were polemically present with no work—a clear warning to all those who keep insisting on the fabrication of commercial objects? To illustrate the risks of rhetoric, Boetti exhibited a bric-a-brac of new materials, a sampling of separate gestures. No, it doesn't really matter if they're new materials. Somewhere else, Gilardi and his foreign friends translated the inevitable tensions resulting from these three "communal" days into forceful reactions, including playing soccer between the sculptures.

THE ACTIONS

Amalfitans could only see the long white line on the overlooking mountain, a pole tight to a rock by British artist Richard Long, who works with the geometrization and integration of natural landscapes. Jean Dibbets's underwater white pole was more secretive, and visible only from the coastline. As for the other Dutchman, Gerhard van Elk, he cleaned and decorated the exhibition floor. The subtlest intervention, the most direct action, was Paolo Icaro's rebuilding the crumbled corner of a house with actual bricks. But the involvement of the audience was an affair between Marotta and Pistoletto, with the former displaying hay bales in the principal square and the latter revealing his by now well-known ham theater show. The real surprise here was the acting talent of Henry Martin (one of the few art critics really available) playing the part of Colnaghi's "domesticated man," and illustrated by Pistoletto, who the local kids addressed as "prince" for the whole duration of the event. It is perhaps wrong to decline to judge these actions, but it's necessary. Their style, concept, and novelty are moot points. The urgency of inventing outside culture and not the opposite has frozen them. What's left to explain is whether and how such actions could be organized and take place outside rare initiatives like Amalfi.

AMALFI ART POVERA + AZIONI POVERE

Ger van Elk

Museum Journaal, February 1969

On 4, 5, and 6 October a gathering was organized in the small coastal tourist resort of Amalfi, between Salerno and Naples in southern Italy. It brought together artists of the Italian Arte Povera (Poor Art) movement, a group associated with Galleria Sperone in Turin, and others—Italians not connected with any gallery and foreigners described by Gilardi as micro-emotive. Of the foreigners who had been invited, Richard Long, Jan Dibbets, Gary Schumm (from Televisie Galerie in Düsseldorf), Boezem's weather forecast, and I were present. The Italians who took part were Anselmo, Boetti, Mario Merz, Pistoletto, Zorio, Prini, Calzolari, Paolo Icaro, Gilardi, Plinio Martelli, and Piacentino. Kounellis and Pascali were represented by some of their works. Pascali had been killed in a traffic accident a few weeks before. There, as critics, were Henri Martin for Art and Artists, Tommaso Trini for Domus, and Germano Celant, who coined the term Arte Povera. This third "Rassegna d'arte figurative" ("exhibition of figurative art") was organized by Mr. Rumma, art teacher, collector, and critic. The two previous events had focused on Pop Art and Hard Edge. Rumma always tries to bring the more recent movements in southern Italy to public attention. Yet I can't help thinking that foreigners are invited for the greater honor and glory of the Italian participants. The event was also clearly described as international in every travel brochure. Nevertheless, this gathering was a very special experience for Dibbets, Long, and me. As foreigners with language difficulties, we were, of course,

bound to be somewhat isolated. We always communicated through Gilardi, Trini, and Henry Martin. The organizers put us in the majestic Belle Vue hotel on the fairy-tale Mediterranean coast, where the climate is wonderful with an average temperature of seventy-seven degrees Fahrenheit (twenty-five degrees Celsius).

Until now the event has been sponsored by Italy's Socialist Party. Not on this most recent occasion, however, because the Socialists lost the elections. The exhibition was staged in the old Arsenale of the medieval republic of Amalfi—a huge Gothic vault hacked out of the rock on the coast. On the first day of the gathering Anselmo, Merz, Pistoletto, and Boetti brought in their "works." Italian TV filmed the proceedings from the first day to the last. Anselmo's "wet mop" slowly created two small rivulets across the tiled floor. His compass pointed to the north. Mario Merz displayed his name in neon in a bath of fat, which slowly melted in the heat from the neon and so likewise drew a random track on the floor. Kounellis stretched a real cow's hide inside a square frame using some thick ropes. Boetti created an environment somewhat reminiscent of old-fashioned pop, consisting of deck chairs, a kitchen table, today's paper, rolls of chicken wire, pieces of gray worsted cloth, bits of rock, and a lot more mysterious stuff held together with Galleria Sperone vermilion stickers. Merz also had a splendid Plexiglass cube, pierced through the top by two wooden arrowheads (spears). Piacentino's minimal beams with an aniline-like marbled surface finish struck me as being rather out of place in a "Poor Art" environment.

There were also open debates with the art critics, who together with the artists are searching for paths leading to new expressive possibilities. This is something that I think should certainly be adopted here in the Netherlands. Despite the organizer's efforts to make the happening international, pretty much everything still turned out to be predominantly local in tone. For instance, the discussions were often about "why the artists from Rome wouldn't take part if Turin (Sperone) was there" and "why the artists from Bologna (Calzolari and Prini) did nothing in Amalfi."

Pistoletto's participation also proved debatable. His contribution to the Arte Povera exhibition was an 26 foot (8-meter) long, 3-foot (1-meter) wide strip of aluminum foil, on which Christmas candles were placed in a long line. An ancient sarcophagus in the Arsenale was covered with old socks and tennis shoes. His mystical work was supplemented by a quasi-religious open-air theatrical performance, complete with torches and a crusade-like procession.

Paolo Icaro undertook the most direct action. Whereas he had no plans on the first day of the meeting, on the last day he showed me an eroded street corner in a small square that he was going to repair in (Renaissance) style. And sure enough, a few hours later the magnificent solid stone blocks had been neatly covered with new cement. Icaro left for Genoa shortly afterward.

The active foreigners were Richard Long, who had spent several months traveling around Switzerland and Germany, where he had an exhibition at Galerie Konrad Fischer in Düsseldorf, Jan Dibbets from Amsterdam, and me. So, a very small minority. Long made good use of his time in the wonderful Mediterranean climate and adapted his contribution to it. On the first working day he painted two beams that happened to be lying around white, tied them together, and then set out on foot for the peak of the highest mountain rising up out of the sea. A trek that took more than the afternoon. That evening, as he returned from his exhausting journey, he showed us the fruits of his labor: a piece of wood, which at that distance looked no bigger than a slender matchstick. Everyone he pointed it out to shook him by the hand to congratulate him on the success of his vision. So it was a sculpture, but only partly made of matter. The material existence of the beam on the mountain peak is only an introduction to the complete image.

Jan Dibbets's action was also adapted to the climate. On the second day of the event he took a rowing boat across the sea to a nearby cove in the rocks, where he tied twelve stakes, each approximately 3 feet (1 meter) long, to a long line and anchored them with pieces of rock in a neat row 30 inches (75 centimeters) below the surface. Afterward, he offered his contribution to the organizer Rumma. Marinus Boezem, who had also been invited, could not come because of teaching commitments, but was represented by his weather forecast and the possibilities presented by experiencing wind and storms. His weather forecast was handed out to everyone to do with as they wanted. I kept myself busy by cleaning the floor of the gallery with a straw broom, after which the dirt was left where it was, glued in a pile. Afterward, the floor was given some gloss here and there with tile wax. The rather uncompromising shape of the rough Gothic columns was also softened and made to "float," as it were, with sand-colored woollen fringing and lace.

Long, Dibbets, and I supplemented the exhibition with a joint project—a "football scene." This involved marking an impressionistic goal on one of the walls in white paint and purchasing a soccer ball (white with black panels). The ball was kicked off from the top of a heap of 6½ pounds (3 kilograms) of white pigment. One of Pistoletto's objects was temporarily relocated, to his great displeasure, and this immediately revitalized the debates that had become bogged down and split those present into two camps: one group condemned it as hooliganism, whereas the other thought that a game with a ball was a very welcome image. It goes without saying that the opponents of soccer gave themselves away as not being very open minded, when they thought it was a pity that the very respectfully arranged "avant-garde" works of art were slightly less than perfectly lit.

Summarizing, I can't help saying that the whole happening struck us as being rather confused, but—and that's what really matters—there were enough works there that were surprising in themselves. Let me remind you of Anselmo's wet mop and Merz's bath of fat and neon. As regards actions, Icaro's wall and Richard Long's "stick on the mountain" were a special experience. [...]

05

EXHIBITION

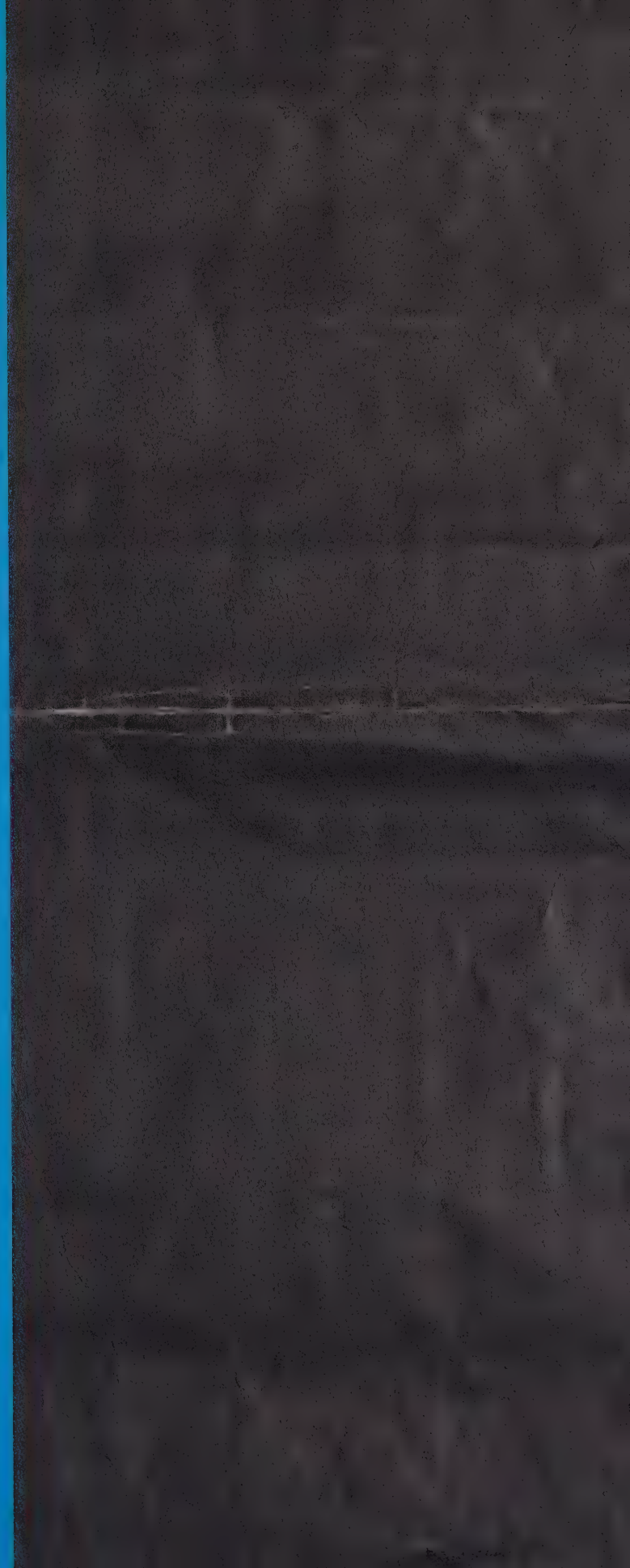
January 5–31, 1969

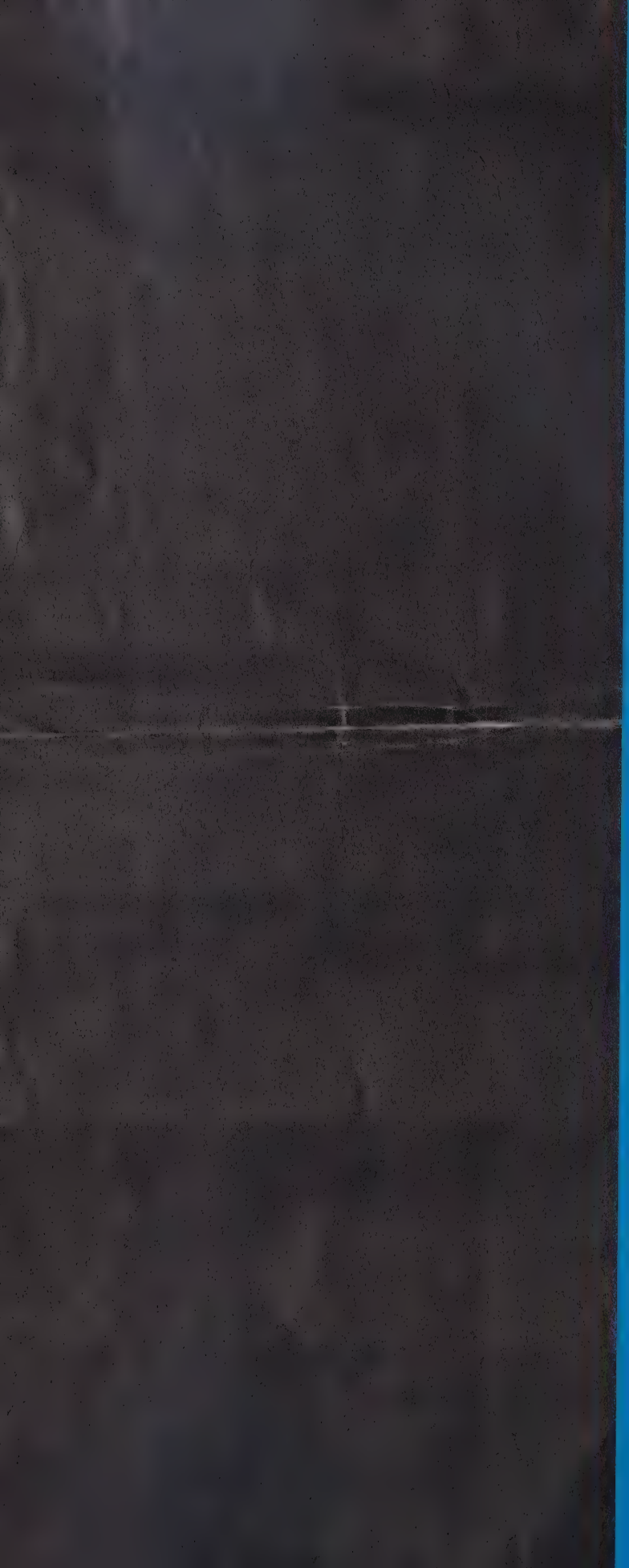
LOCATION

44 East 52nd Street, New York

DATE

5–31 January 1969





CURATOR
Seth Siegelaub

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner

EXHIBITION CATALOG
January 5–31, 1969. New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1969. With lists of works, and texts by Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner. The catalog is itself part of the exhibition.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 4
Total number of works: 32
Total attendance: 486

A paradigmatic exhibition of conceptual art, "January 5–31, 1969" (also known as "The January Show") took place in a two-room midtown Manhattan office rented for the occasion for $350. Or, rather, two works by each of the artists in the exhibition were in the room of the office that was devoted to display. The complete thirty-two-piece show by Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner could be found only in the catalog, presented through words and photographs that referred to the ideas constituting the artworks. Just as Dada and Surrealist exhibitions often took a form related to the art that they contained, so this exhibition-as-catalog employed the structure of a publication presenting sets of concepts.

This radical innovation was the work of art dealer Seth Siegelaub, the organizer of "The January Show." Siegelaub had pioneered the exhibition-as-publication two months earlier with a catalog for Douglas Huebler, and more ambitiously in December with the so-called Xerox Book, a photocopied compendium of twenty-five-page presentations by seven artists. His efforts in this regard culminated in the spring and summer with shows where only in the catalog were all works united: "March 1–31, 1969," whose thirty-one artists each created a piece on a different day of the month, and "July, August, September 1969," in which eleven artists displayed works throughout the world. But "The January Show" also joins two other exhibitions to form a four-month trilogy presenting the modes of American art that very soon would be exported to major European exhibitions. Bracketing "The January Show" were "9 at Leo Castelli," Robert Morris's assembling of Post-Minimalist sculpture in December at Castelli's uptown warehouse, and in February and March at Cornell University the groundbreaking "Earth Art" exhibition, curated by Willoughby Sharp.

The first room in the office displayed no artwork, instead featuring a table with the exhibition catalog and other publications. There was also a desk for a secretary to provide information, occupied by artist Adrian Piper. Her first task had been accomplished during the six-and-a-half-hour preview, when she took Polaroid photographs of a dispersing rectangle of sawdust at the entrance, and taped them on the wall in the other room (Douglas Huebler's Duration Piece No. 6, 1969). The preview was filled with artists and figures from the art world, invited by a printed announcement based on Dan Graham's 1966 text-generating Schema. By the end of its run, 488 people had visited the exhibition. As a promotional move, virtually all pieces listed in the catalog were marked as already in private collections. The greatest number had been purchased by stockbroker Robert Topol, a client of dealer Manny Greer, who helped Siegelaub mount the exhibition.

Despite references to ownership in the catalog, Siegelaub and these artists worked in tension with the commercial art system. And along with the resistance of conceptualism through its focus on the ephemeral, imperceptible, and immaterial, January 1969 saw more active opposition. The day before "The January Show" preview, Vassilakis Takis removed his sculpture from the Museum of Modern Art exhibition "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age" because it was displayed without his permission, an action that led to the founding of the Art Workers Coalition and further cultural and political protest. That spring Siegelaub began thinking seriously about the legal rights of artists, and by 1971, he had produced "The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement" in collaboration with attorney Robert Projansky. The next year he left the contemporary art world. Siegelaub's legacy of curatorial innovation remains central to the history of exhibitions, and "The January Show" is a critical example of the way in which an exhibition's form can be related to its content.

← Cover of the *January 5–31, 1969* catalog. Each artist had two double-page spreads, the first listing their works on the left with a photo on the right, and the second spread having a photo on the left and an artist's statement on the right.

↓ The artists of "January 5–31, 1969" (left to right): Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner.

→ Seth Siegelaub, the organizer of the "January 5–31, 1969" exhibition, standing on the steps in front of 44 East 52nd Street, New York.

Robert Barry

1. Wall to Wall Interior Piece, September 1968, thin black plastic line and screw eyes, 2'10" x 12'4" (± 7"H). Collection Mr. and Mrs. John W Wendler, N. Y

2. Outdoor nylon monofilament installation, December 1, 1968, nylon monofilament and screw eyes, 65' x 43' (± 14 1/2' — 16' above ground). Collection: Mr and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N. Y

3. (Proposal for) 99.5 mc Carrier Wave (WBAI—FM), 1968, 99.5 megacycles; 5.4 kilowatts, New York. Collection*

4. 88 mc Carrier Wave (FM), 1968 88 megacycles; 5 milliwatts, 9 volt DC battery, Collection: Mr. and Mrs Manuel Greer, N. Y

5. 1600 kc Carrier Wave (AM), 1968, 1600 kilocycles; 60 milliwatts; 110 volts AC/DC. Collection: Mr and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N. Y

6. New York to Luxembourg CB Carrier Wave, January 5 — 31, 1969,(N. Y station WR2WER to Luxembourg station LX1DT), 10 meters; 28 megacycles, 180 watts. Collection*

7. 40 KHZ ultrasonic soundwave installation, January 4, 1969, 8.25 mm ultrasonic soundwave. Collection: Mr Seth Siegelaub, N. Y.

8. 0.5 Microcurie Radiation Installation, January 5, 1969, Barium-133, Central Park, N. Y., 10 year duration (approximate). Collection: Private, N. Y.

*Nontransferable

Facing page: Photograph of Catalog number 2.
Following page: 2 photographs of artist's studio being occupied simultaneously by Catalog numbers 4 and 5

Joseph Kosuth

17. Four titles, 1966 glass, 4 glass sheets at 3'x3' Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N Y

18. Art idea made with white words on nine gray painted square canvases, 1966, liquitex on canvas, 9 panels each 2 1/2' x 2 1/2'. Collection: Private, N.Y

19 Titled (Art as Idea as Idea), 1967, photographic process, 4' x 4'. Collection: Mr and Mrs. Roy Lichtenstein, N.Y

20. Insurance (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, insurance form and cancelled airplane tickets. Collection: Miss Christine Kozlov N Y

21 I Existence (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, (published in:) New York Times (January 5, 1969); Museum News (January 1, 1969), Artforum (January 1969); The Nation (December 23, 1968). Collection Mr. and Mrs. Eugene M. Schwartz, N.Y

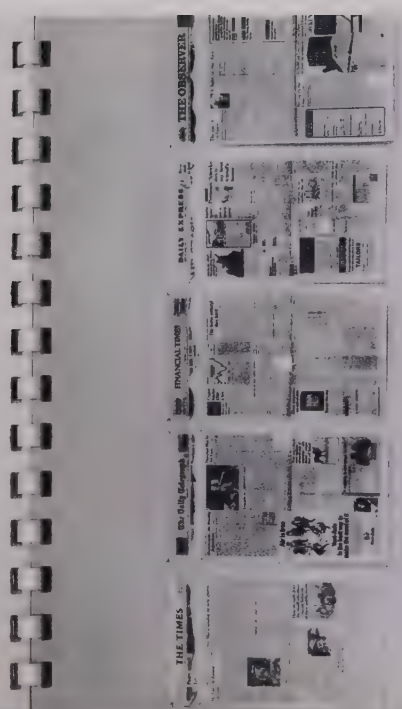
22. VI Time (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, (published in:) the London Times; the Daily Telegraph (London); the Financial Times (London); the Daily Express (London); the Observer (London)- all in the December 27, 1968 issue. Collection Mr Seth Siegelaub, N Y

23. IV. Order (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, (Published in:) Village Voice (January 1, 1969); the Partisan Review (January 15 1969); the New York Post (January 4/5, 1969); Variety (February 3, 1969); Art International (February 1969). Collection: Mr. David Greer, N.Y

24. V Number (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, (published in:) Art News (February 1969); New York Review of books (February 1, 1969). Women s Wear Daily (February 1, 1969). Collection: Mr. Arthur R Rose, N Y

Note: The art is formless and sizeless, however the presentation has specific characteristics

Facing page: Photograph of mock-up for Catalog number 22.
Following page: Photograph of Catalog number 19



↑↑ Two of Robert Barry's pages from the *January 5–31, 1969* catalog. The right-hand page in this spread shows the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol, with Barry's nylon monofilament work invisibly installed on 1 December 1968.

↑ A spread from the catalog showing (on the right-hand page) newspapers reporting Joseph Kosuth's work *VI Time (Art as Idea as Idea)* from 1968, which was also installed in Siegelaub's rented gallery space at 44 East 52nd Street, New York.

Douglas Huebler

9.42nd Parallel, 1968, 21 Certified Postal Receipts (11 sender and 10 receiver), 3040 miles (approximate). Truro, Mass.; E Hartland; Conn., W Hurley; N.Y., Girard; Pa., Sherwood; Mich., Kings; Ill., Keystone, Iowa, Hyannis; Neb., Stone, Idaho, Portage; Utah, McDermitt, Nev., New Pine Creek, Ore., Smith River; Calif., and Hilts; Calif. Collection: Mr. Alan Power, London.

10. Drawing, 1968, Black paint on board, 40"x40", Collection: Mrs. Douglas Huebler, Mass.

11. Duration Piece #6, 1969, Sawdust, 3 1/2'x18', New York, time: 6 hours. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Greer, N.Y.

12. Haverhill-Windham-New York Marker Piece, 1968, Materials: none, 650 miles, Mass. Rt. 125; New Hampshire Rt. 101; Vermont Rt. 5; Interstate Rt. 91 (Mass.); Interstate Rt. 91 (Conn.); Wilbur Cross Pkwy. (Conn.); Merritt Parkway (Conn.); Deegan Expressway (Bronx, N.Y.); Merritt Parkway (Conn.); Interstate Rt 91 (Conn.); Conn. Rt. 15-44, Mass Turnpike, Mass. Rt. 495. Collection: Mr. Seth Siegelaub, N.Y.

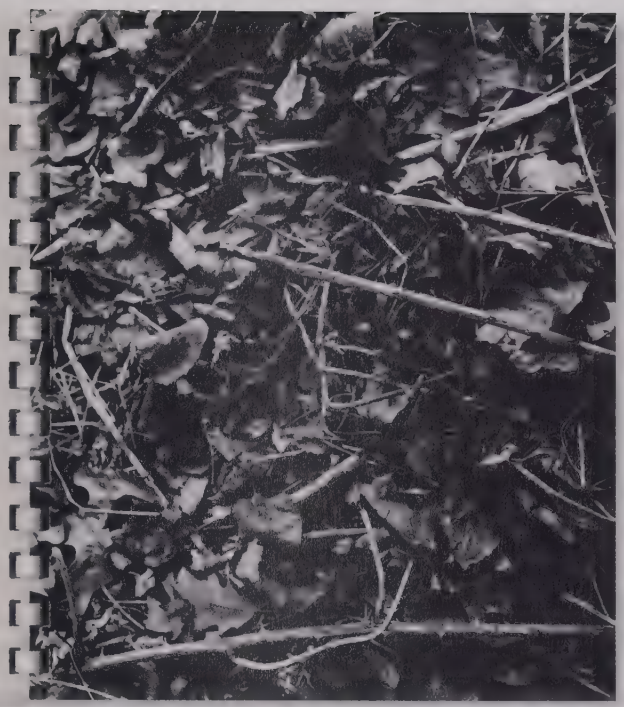
13. Cross Manhatten Rectangle, 1968, 35- 1" diameter stickers (white), 1/4 mile x 2 2/3 miles, New York, N.Y. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. James G. Butler, Los Angeles.

14. Times Square Circle Shape, 1968, 9- 1" diameter stickers, One circle (4000' radius), New York, N.Y. Collection: Mr and Mrs Robert M. Topol, Mamaroneck, N.Y.

15. Duration Piece #7, 1968, 5- 1" stickers (felt), 2 triangles (with common apex at Herald Square), New York, time: 5 years. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. William Owsley, Oxford, Ohio.

16. Variable Piece #2, 1968, 40- 8 1/2"x11" maps (New England), Size: Indeterminate, Providence, R.I. Collection: Private, N.Y.

Facing Page: Documentation (photograph, 10"x8") for Catalog Number 12.
Following page: Documentation (photograph, 8"x10") for Catalog number 16.



Lawrence Weiner

25. One standard Air Force dye marker thrown into the sea, 1968. Freehold

26. An amount of bleach poured upon a rug and allowed to bleach, 1968 Collection: Private, N.Y.

27. Two minutes of spray paint directly upon the floor from a standard aerosol spray can, 1968 Collection: Mr. Sol Lewitt, N.Y.

28. One sheet of clear plexiglass of arbitrary size and thickness secured at the four corners and exact center by screws to the floor, 1968. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Hoit, N.Y.

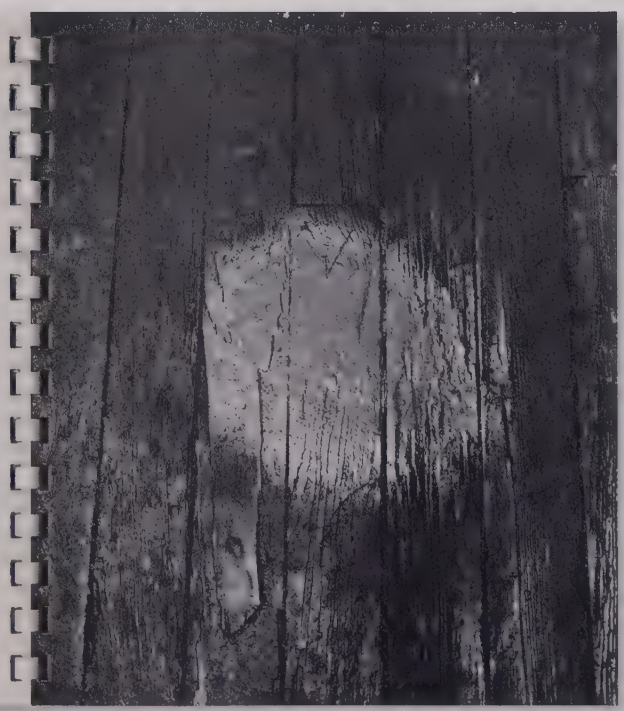
29. A 2" wide 1' deep trench cut across a standard one car driveway, 1968. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol Mamaroneck, N.Y.

30. A 36' x 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall, 1968 Collection: Mr. Seth Siegelaub, N.Y.

31. Field cratered by simultaneously exploded 1/3 lb. TNT charges, 1968. Collection: Mr. Raymond L. Dirks, N.Y.

32. Three minutes of forty pound pressure spray of white highway paint upon a well tended lawn. The lawn is allowed to grow and not tended until the grass is free of all vestiges of white highway paint, 1968. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Topol. Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Facing page: Photograph of Catalog number 27.
Following page: Photograph of Catalog number 29.

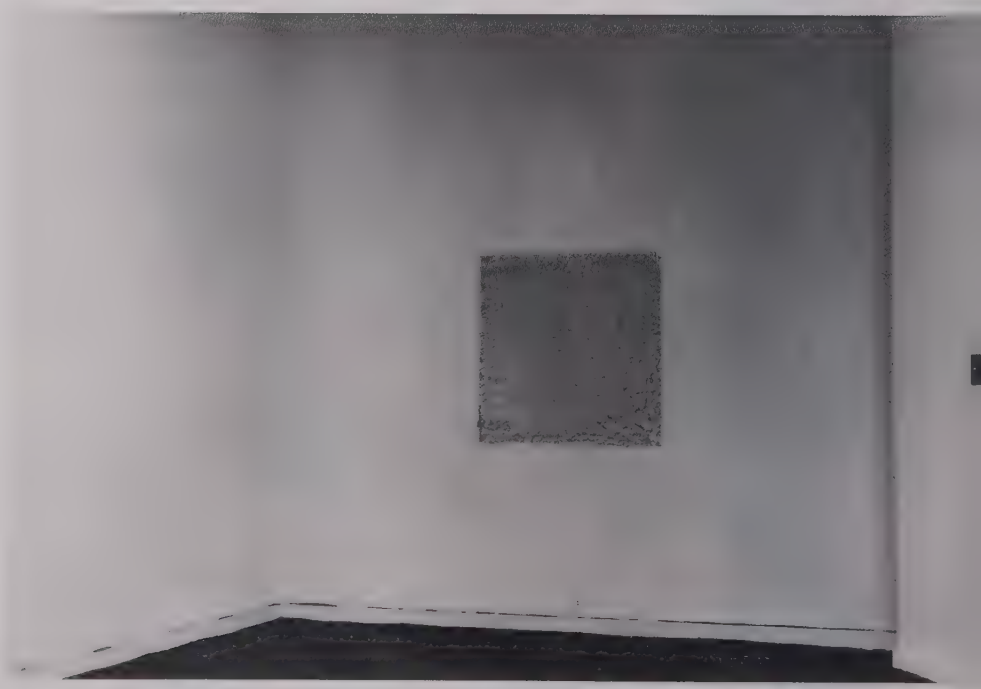


↑↑ Pages by Douglas Huebler from the *January 5–31, 1969* catalog, showing (on right-hand page) his 1968 *Haverhill-Windham-New York Marker Piece*, which consists of photographs taken every fifty miles along a 650-mile (1,000 km) route connecting the three cities in the title.

↑ One of Lawrence Weiner's spreads from the catalog, showing (on the right-hand page) his *Two minutes of spray paint directly on the floor from a standard aerosol can.*

Instructions for secretary

1. Get keys
2. Answer phone "Seth Siegelaub"
3. Catalogs are available only at gallery - if any one wants extras we will mail them. (except for the press)
4. If someone is interested in purchasing work, call me.
5. My other phone is 288-5031.
6. Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 - 5:30.
7. Gallery will exist for this month only.
8. Every morning turn on both Robert Barry pieces.
9. Lawrence Weiner has one freehold piece (see catalog) - if anyone inquires about this - tell them they can own the piece by making arrangements with Mr. Weiner at GA7-4113.
10. Have people sign guest book.
11. The typewritten information sheet is for Press only.
12. For the first 6 hours of the exhibition (sat.) take a poloroid photo every 1/2 hour of the Huebler sawdust (looking into the hall) and then place it on the wall (with scotch tape) near the typewritten document. At the end of the 6 hours (5 PM Sat.) remove the sawdust and throw it away.



← View of the reception area at 44 East 52nd Street, New York, with artist Adrian Piper seated at the desk. Her "secretarial" duties included taking Polaroid photographs of Douglas Huebler's sawdust work at half-hour intervals on the opening day and sticking the photographs to the wall using Scotch tape. She was also instructed to turn on the electricity for both of Robert Barry's works each morning, and to encourage visitors to sign the guest book.

↙↙ Seth Siegelaub's typed instructions to the exhibition "secretary," the artist Adrian Piper.

↙ View of the exhibition, showing Lawrence Weiner's *A 36'"x 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall.* It would also be installed in the "When Attitudes Become Form" exhibition in Bern later that year (see p. 99).

↗ Installation view of Douglas Huebler's *Duration Piece No. 6*, Polaroid photographs of a rectangle of sawdust at the entrance to the exhibition, dispersed by visitors' footsteps. The photographs were taken by Adrian Piper at half-hour intervals on the opening day of the exhibition.

→ View of the exhibition. On the windowsill is a set of photographs documenting Douglas Huebler's *Haverhill-Windham-New York Marker Piece* (also shown in the catalog). To the right are Joseph Kosuth's newspaper works, *I. Existence (Art as Idea as Idea)* and *VI Time (Art as Idea as Idea)*.

↘ The windowsill, with loose photographs documenting Douglas Huebler's *Haverhill-Windham-New York Marker Piece*.

FOUR INTERVIEWS

Arthur Rose (pseudonym for Joseph Kosuth)
Arts Magazine, February 1969

The four artists who respond to questions from Arthur Rose have been working in the Conceptual area longer than most; in some ways they may be considered "originators" of the movement. This frank and concise exchange contains observations that focus in a general way on many aspects of the Conceptual aesthetic. Douglas Huebler states, "[...] I really don't care about precise or exhaustive documentation. The documents prove nothing. They make the piece exist [...]" In explaining how he arrived at his present views, Joseph Kosuth says, "I began to realize [...] that the intelligent and sensitive people in my environment had experiences with nonart portions of their visual world that were of such quality and consistency that the demarcation of similar experiences as art would make no appreciable difference." He concludes the thought with these words: "[...] perhaps mankind was beginning to outgrow the need for art on that level." In discussing his art, Lawrence Weiner remarks, "One could say the subject matter is materials, but its reason to be goes way beyond materials to something else, that something else being art."

ROBERT BARRY

Q: How did you arrive at the kind of work you are now doing?

BARRY: It's a logical continuation of my earlier work. A few years ago when I was painting, it seemed that paintings would look one way in one place and, because of lighting and other things, would look different in another place. Although it was the same object, it was another work of art. Then I made paintings which incorporated as part of their design the wall on which they hung. I finally gave up painting for the wire installations (two of which are in the show). Each wire installation was made to suit the place in which it was installed. They cannot be moved without being destroyed.

Color became arbitrary. I started using thin transparent nylon monofilament. Eventually the wire became so thin that it was virtually invisible. This led to my use of a material which is invisible, or at least not perceivable in a traditional way. Although this poses problems, it also presents endless possibilities. It was at this point that I discarded the idea that art is necessarily something to look at.

Q: If your work is not perceivable, how does anyone deal with it or even know of its existence?

BARRY: I'm not only questioning the limits of our perception, but the actual nature of perception. These forms certainly do exist, they are controlled and have their own characteristic. They are made of various kinds of energy which exist outside the narrow arbitrary limits of our own senses. I use various devices to produce the energy, detect it, measure it, and define its form.

By just being in this show, I'm making known the existence of the work. I'm presenting these things in an artistic situation using the space and the catalog.

I think this will be less of a problem as people become more acclimated to this art. As with any art, an interested person reacts in a personal way based on his own experience and imagination. Obviously, I can't control that.

Q: Exactly what kind of energy do you use?

BARRY: One kind of energy is electromagnetic waves. There is a piece in the show that uses the carrier wave of a radio station for a prescribed length of time, not as a means of transmitting information but rather as an object. Another piece uses the carrier wave of a citizen's band transmitter to bridge two distant points in New York and Luxembourg several times during the run of the show. Because of the position of the sun and favorable atmospheric conditions during January—the month of the show—this piece could be made. At another time, under different conditions, other locations would have to be used. There are two smaller carrier-wave pieces, which have just enough power to fill the exhibition space. They are very different in character, one being AM, the other being FM, but both will occupy the same space at the same time—such is the nature of the material.

Also in the show will be a room filled with ultrasonic sound. I've also used microwaves and radiation. There are many other possibilities that I intend to explore—and I'm sure there are a lot of things we don't yet know about that exist in the space around us, and, though we don't see or feel them, we somehow know they are out there.

DOUGLAS HUEBLER

Q: How does the work "enter the mind" as you have put it?

HUEBLER: Through a system of documentation, which includes the use of maps, drawings, photographs, and descriptive language. The documents are not intended to be necessarily interesting, that is, they are not "art." What I want is to use the documents to create a condition of absolute coexistence between "image" and "language." For example, the "image" of my *New York Variable Piece #1* is a description of space made from the location of "points" that are either static or move vertically and horizontally in a random disposition. There is no possible way in which this piece can be experienced perceptually. It can be totally experienced through its documentation.

Q: Can any of your works be experienced as physical presence?

HUEBLER: None can—so far at least—and yet they do possess material substance. The area of a "site sculpture" is immense and the sites are located by very small markers that, no doubt, will soon enough actually disappear. The material of a duration piece does disappear during the period of time that it is made. Nonetheless, it actually exists in present time through its documentation.

Q: Do you attach any significance to the sites in your pieces?

HUEBLER: None. When I go to the site to document it—to "mark it"—I think "here it is" and that's all. As a matter of fact, I consider it important that it is no different from the next 10 feet (3 meters) or next block or whatever. It's very much like seeing the border of a state.

Both the sites selected and the shape that they describe are "neutral" and only function to form "that" work. In effect, no privileged value is assigned to the elements that form the work over those other possible things that are not chosen. In a similar way, I would point out that "duration" works do not necessarily "complete" the destiny of the material used within the specific situation. A period of time is chosen and whatever happens to the situation is documented. In some works, "logical" chronology is the structure and in others the sequence is scrambled after the documentation is complete.

Q: That leads me to ask if all this documentation is complete, precise, or logical.

HUEBLER: In the same sense that I don't care about specific appearance, I really don't care about precise or exhaustive documentation. The documents prove nothing. They make the piece exist and I am interested in having that existence occur in as simple a way as possible. Where a thing is located involves everything else and I like that idea much more than how I "feel" about it or what it looks like.

JOSEPH KOSUTH

Q: For the last few years, all of your work has been subtitled "Art as Idea as Idea." Why and how did you arrive at this and what does it mean exactly?

KOSUTH: Well, a few years ago I became increasingly aware of the fact that the separation between one's ideas and one's use of material, if not wide at the inception of the work, becomes almost uncommunicatively wide when confronted by a viewer. I wanted to eliminate that gap. I also began to realize that there is nothing abstract about a specific material. There is always something hopelessly real about materials, be they ordered or unordered.

I began to realize, as well, that the intelligent and sensitive people in my environment had experiences with nonart portions of their visual world that were of such quality and consistency that the demarcation of similar experiences as art would make no appreciable difference; that perhaps mankind was beginning to outgrow the need for art on that level; that he was beginning to deal with his world aesthetically. It was the feeling I had about the gap between materials and ideas that led me to present a series of photostats of the dictionary definition of water. I was interested in just presenting the idea of water. I had used actual water earlier because I liked its colorless, formless quality. I didn't consider the photostat a work of art; only the idea was art. The words in the definition supplied the art information; just as the shape and color of a work could be considered its art information. But I wanted complete art and wanted to remove even entertainment as a reason for its existence. I wanted to remove the experience from the work of art. In this series, I went from presenting an abstraction of a particular (water, air) to abstractions of abstractions (meaning, empty, universal, nothing, time).

Q: Would you discuss what you are doing now?

KOSUTH: My current work, which consists of categories from the thesaurus, deals with the multiple aspects of an idea of something. And, like the other work, it's an attempt to deal with abstraction. The largest change has been in its form of presentation going from the mounted photostat to the purchasing of spaces in newspapers and periodicals (with one "work" sometimes taking up as many as five or six spaces in that many publications—depending on how many divisions exist in the category). This way the immateriality of the work is stressed and any possible connections to painting are severed. The new work is not connected with a precious object—it's accessible to as many people as are interested: it's nondecorative—having nothing to do with architecture; it can be brought into the home or museum but wasn't made with either in mind; it can be dealt with by being torn out of its publication and inserted into a notebook or stapled to the wall—or not torn out at all—but any such decision is unrelated to the art. My role as an artist ends with the work's publication.

Q: Why do you think the—as you put it—"art of our time" cannot be painting and sculpture?

KOSUTH: Being an artist now means to question the nature of art. If one is questioning the nature of painting, one cannot be questioning the nature of art; if an artist accepts painting (or sculpture), he is accepting the tradition that goes with it. That's because the word art is general and the word painting is specific. Painting is a kind of art. If you make paintings, you are already accepting (not questioning) the nature of art. One is then accepting the nature of art to be the European tradition of a painting-sculpture dichotomy. But in recent years the best new work has been neither painting nor sculpture, and increasing numbers of young artists make art that is neither one. When words lose their meaning they are meaningless. We have our own time and our own reality and it need not be justified by being hooked into European art history. Nothing being done could be done without the accumulated knowledge we have at our disposal, obviously. One can never completely escape the past, but to look in that direction intentionally and blatantly is creative timidity. The academic and conservative mind always craves historical justification: a sort of homogenization of ancestor worship and cravings for parental approval. One should learn about the past but not from it, so that one can find out what was real then and what one doesn't want to do now.

Q: Won't the difficulty of the work, and its use of language rather than colors, bore people?

KOSUTH: Inherent in the artist's intentions are his ideas, and the new art is dependent on language not much less than philosophy or science. Obviously the shift from the perceptual to the conceptual is a shift from the physical to the mental. And where an intellectual interest doesn't exist on the part of the viewer, a physical (sight or touch) one is desired. Nonartists often insist on something along with the art because they are not that excited by the idea of art. They need that physical excitation along with the art to keep them interested. But the artist has that same obsessed interest in art that the physicist has in physics and the philosopher in philosophy.

Q: But if one accepts your idea of art, and the artist no longer adds to man's visual world, what will be art's future?
KOSUTH: I'll pass on that by first painting out something. The major philosophical tendencies of this century show a complete rejection of traditional philosophy. It just isn't possible to make conclusions about the world in the way it once was. Among the educated and the youth, religion as well has lost its meaning. The assumption of traditional philosophy and religion are unreal at this stage of man's intelligence. If philosophy (and religion) is finished, it is possible that art's viability may be connected to its ability to exist as a pure, self-conscious endeavor. Art may exist in the future as a kind of philosophy by analogy. This can only occur, however, if art remains "self-conscious" and concerns itself only with art problems, changing as those problems may be. If art does become a "philosophy by analogy," it will be because its intellectual rigor (in terms of the artist's ability to "create") is equal in quality to the intensity of the best thinking of the past. If proper philosophy cannot be in our time, then obviously art posing as philosophy would be equally meaningless. But an art concerned with the special issues related only to art may fill that gap in man's thought in our time.

LAWRENCE WEINER

Q: When you did your early pieces, which consisted of paint being applied directly on the floor or wall (I am thinking of "the spray on the floor for so many minutes" pieces—one of which was reproduced in *Arts Magazine* last October—the paint thrown on the wall piece, and the paint poured on the floor piece), what did you have in mind?
WEINER: Making art.
Q: It has been said that some of the "Antiform" artists have been influenced by the look of some of your work. Is this true, and what is the primary difference between their work and yours?
WEINER: I can't imagine how, as they are primarily concerned with making objects for display—which has nothing to do with the intent of my work.
Q: An integral aspect of your work is the existence of a receiver. The receiver—as I understand it—decides whether you will build the piece, have the piece fabricated, or not build it at all. Why?
WEINER: Because it doesn't matter.
Q: What doesn't matter?
WEINER: The condition of the piece. If I were to choose the condition, that would be an art decision, which would lend unnecessary and unjustified weight to what amounts to presentation—and that has very little to do with the art.
Q: What is your interest in removing as an art process?
WEINER: I'm not interested in the process. Whereas the idea of removal is just as—if not more—interesting than the intrusion of a fabricated object into a space, as sculpture is.
Q: What role does time play in your work?
WEINER: As a designation of quantity.
Q: What is the subject matter of your work, would you say?
WEINER: Materials.
Q: You state that the subject matter of your work is materials, yet you claim that you are not a materialist—how does this follow?
WEINER: Materialist implies a primary involvement in materials, but I am primarily concerned with art. One could say the subject matter is materials, but its reason to be goes way beyond materials to something else, that something else being art.

NEW YORK COMMENTARY

Dore Ashton
Studio International, March 1969

Quite another form of disembodiment occurs in another "event," which is called an exhibition, and whose makers are, or consider themselves, visual artists. The exhibition, as Seth Siegelaub announces it, "consists of (the ideas communicated in) the catalog," which is a spiral-bound opus of some twelve pages. As for the [ideas communicated in] the catalog, they are rather limited, and do not bear the strain of constant repetition. Basically, these four artists are bored with art, as perhaps the poets are bored with poetry, and are looking for the nearest way out. The nearest way out for the visual artist is the word. He, however, being traditionally awed by verbalization, reveres what he calls "ideas," and so his favorite words are designed to suggest that they conceal some real ideas.

The world is full of objects, writes Douglas Huebler, I do not wish to add any more. Instead, he adds a few inscrutable notions accompanied by documentation that "takes the form of photographs, maps, drawings, and descriptive language." Joseph Kosuth, who has gotten a lot of mileage out of his "Art as Idea as Idea" by inserting thesaurus definitions into the newspaper, is too bored or muddled to make even that much of a statement and is content to repeat a dadaist formula ad nauseam. Lawrence Weiner in a stylized little entry in this clever logbook of futility notes. "1. The artist may construct the piece. 2. The piece may be fabricated. 3. The piece need not be built. Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership."

All this may be interpreted as a criticism of certain contemporary "ideas" concerning the nature of a work of art, but it is weak criticism, and not amusing enough to hold attention. We know what these artists are unwilling to do. Doing is out, but is thinking in?

PAINTING IS OBSOLETE

Gregory Battcock
New York Free Press, 23 January 1969

An exhibition that is entitled "0 Objects, 0 Painters, 0 Sculptures ..." has been organized by Seth Siegelaub, a pleasant sort of sexy chap, and can be seen at 44 East 52nd St. until January 31, 1969. Anyone who doesn't go needs his head examined because this is perhaps the first exhibit this season that really goes someplace and offers something a little bit new and something that really matters. It's like everything that happened in 1968, at Columbia and Paris and all other symbolic places, is finally being understood,

and it all really meant something and it really will result in something because it already has in this show. Finally, in art, the revolution that one sometimes briefly understands at perhaps the Fillmore, or late at night on WBAI, or in weird, unexpected glimpses at surprising places around town, or watching a Warhol movie or in unplanned encounters with sex or metaphysics or acid or grass or just nice people—it's here, in art. A beautiful exhibit that makes so much sense right now, and that is so clear and frank and simple and has such a nice smile—is offered by four artists and finally there is an exhibit that doesn't have any junk in it, doesn't have anything at all really. If that doesn't fuck up all those nice comfortable minds that like art to have big dollar signs, and armed guards, and ticket takers and don't (or do) touch, and that most annoying of all demands some modern art tries to make, experience. Why do we have to experience anything. I don't like playing with buttons and little balls, and opening little doors, and patting slimy surfaces or listening to gurgling or popping sounds when I'm around art. I can do all that, even better, with real things, and if art is anything remotely like imitation of reality, then I don't like it since I don't like imitations.

The stuff in this show leaves you alone, more or less, and it only grabs your mind, which is fine, and when you leave you really feel like you've been through something and you have a lot of ideas, which you can think about or throw out and it doesn't matter which you decide to do, despite my aged philosophy professor at NYU who says that, in this day and age, drugs have resulted in the modern condition of "intellectual perversion" because people are all hung up on experience itself, and after all experience itself is no good if it doesn't lead to positive learning. Which only shows that someone should turn the old goat on but nobody will because it's hard to turn somebody on if they live in a closet, which he does even though they call it University Village and he drags himself to Europe every summer and has tenure. Nothing is going to change really in the American University until they get rid of everybody who is on tenure. Just the fact that a college teacher would want to have tenure is enough reason to fire him or at least disqualify him from teaching. Only the prof who doesn't care about his job or the false "security" it affords is in a position to recognize the real things that are happening, but that most people cannot, must not, see.

It would be nice to compare Godard's *A Movie Like Any Other* with this new exhibition I'm writing about because there must be some pretty interesting reasons for a comparison but the editor of this rag keeps telling me not to write about movies, for some reason, so back to art, which is O.K. when it's this type of art. The works in the show are ideas that are not intended to be any more than ideas. As such they are pretty much invisible, which itself is a good idea. We've suspected, for some time now, that art perhaps can be invisible and now it is. Therefore there's nothing to steal, nothing to damage, no images to remember later, and we don't have to worry about slides and lighting. If 69 contributes to the history of art invisibility, art history students from now on will remember us fondly.

Another thing about this show is that perhaps it isn't art and maybe it's art criticism, which would be something I've suspected all along, that the painter and sculptor have been moving farther and farther away from art and in the end perhaps all that would remain is art criticism. [...] What a show like this does is, in one stroke not only demolish the Museum of Modern Art (the Whitney demolished itself last week) but all those painting courses they are still cranking out in the "art" schools, which were doomed a decade ago but nobody noticed, oh well it's too bad, after spending all that money on paints and everything. [...]

VARIATIONS (VI) OR THE MERZ(BAU) OR WHATEVER

Peter Frank

Barnard Bulletin, 19 February 1969

The Siegelaub gallery existed twenty-seven days, from January 5th until the 31st. The show, however, is permanent. Exhibited was the documentation; the "art" is the catalog itself.

In Conceptual art, the idea behind the work is more important than the execution of the work. The Siegelaub catalog is all proposals, and that's enough: the exhibition—documentation was just particular realizations of specific works annotated in the catalog.

If I hadn't written this, I'd be confused, too. Examples speak louder than descriptions, and I quote from the catalog:

Robert Barry:

4. *88 mc Carrier Wave (FM), 1968 88 megacycles; 5 milliwatts, 9 volt DC battery, Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Greers, N.Y.*
5. *1600 kc Carrier Wave (AM), 1968, 16,000 kilocycles; 60 milli watts; 110 volts AC–DC. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Topol, Mamaroneck, N.Y.*
6. *New York to Luxembourg CB Carrier Wave, January 5–31, 1969 (N.Y. station WR2–WER to Luxembourg station LX1DT), 10 meters; 28 mega-cycles; 180 watts. Nontransferable.*

Number 4 and 5 were in the gallery, but without a radio tuned to the frequencies one was unaware of their presence. If one had a radio thus tuned, a complete absence of noise—static or otherwise—would have occurred at those frequencies.

Douglas Huebler:

12. *Haverhill—Windham—New York Marker Piece, 1968, Materials: none, 650 miles, Mass. Rt. 125; New Hampshire. Rt. 101: Vermont Rt. 5; Interstate Rt. 91 (Mass.); Interstate Rt 91 (Conn.); Wilbur Cross Pkway. (Conn.); Merritt Parkway (Conn.); Deegan expressway (Bronx, N.Y.); Merritt Parkway (Conn.); Interstate Rt. 91 (Conn.); Conn. Rt. 15-44, Mass. Turnpike, Mass. Rt. 495. Collection: Mr Seth Siegelaub, N.Y.*

Photographs (thirteen in all) of the ground at the spots detailed in Number 12, plus a road map on which were delineated the thirteen locations, appeared in the gallery. Number 11 (*Duration Piece #6*, 1969, Sawdust, 3½'x 18', New York, time 6 hours. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Greer,

N.Y.) had been at the gallery on opening night. After six hours, the rectangular plot of sawdust had been kicked apart.

Joseph Kosuth:

21: *I. Existence (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, (published in:) New York Times (January 1, 1969); Artforum (January 1969); The Nation (December 23, 1968), Collection: Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Schwartz, N.Y.*

22. *VI. Time (Art as Idea as Idea), 1968, Published in the London Times; the Daily Telegraph (London); the Financial Times (London); the Daily Express (London); Observer (London)—all in the December 27, 1968 issue. Collection: Mr. Seth Siegelaub, N.Y.*

The pages of the various newspapers containing Kosuth's cryptic, bone-dry "definitions" were mounted on the wall; the London papers, in actuality, were dummies of the actual "definitions" on pages of older issues.

Lawrence Weiner:

30. *A 36' x 36' removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall. 1968. Collection: Mr Siegelaub. N.Y.*

Self-explanatory. Conceptualists' attitudes towards realizing their ideas can be summed up in Weiner's catalog statement:

1. *The artist may construct the piece*
2. *The piece may be fabricated*
3. *The piece need not be built*

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.

You know what this [Conceptual art] means, don't you? That anyone is an artist with anything. An end to the division between art and life, an end to the need for aesthetic dogma, principle, standards, debate, et al. A friend of mine refused to paint because he could see the art he wanted to create in his head, and that was enough. The medium is the message, the mind is the medium.

There'll be enough people around who insist on having Fine Art on their walls and in their museums, and there'll be enough people turning out this visual art for quite a while yet. Don't tell me to shut-up-because-if-I-get-other-people-to-think-like-me-there-won't-be-any-art-as-we-know-it-anymore. As a matter of fact, I'd kinda miss the ol' aesthetic myself. But the absolute freedom of Conceptual art is too glorious to abandon for the sake of order.

06

EXHIBITION

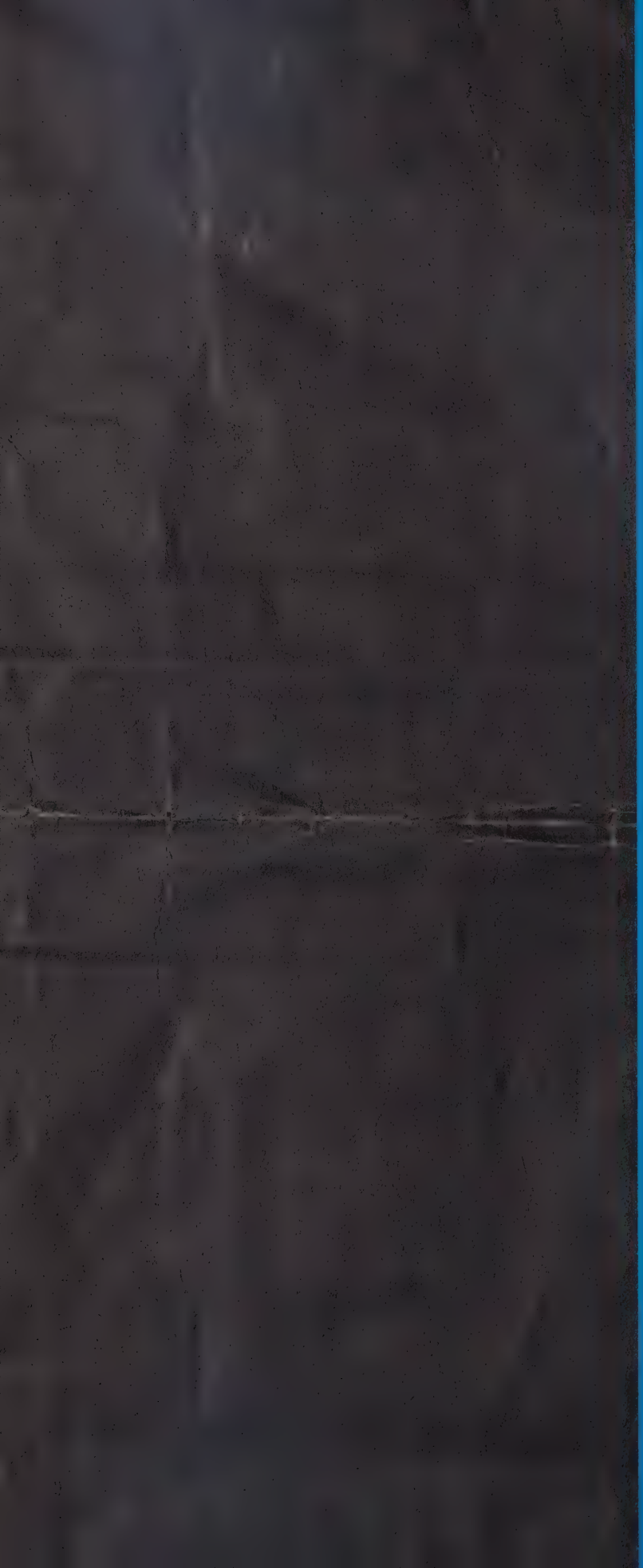
Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form: Works– Concepts– Processes– Situations– Information

LOCATION

Kunsthalle Bern

DATE

22 March–
27 April 1969



CURATOR

Harald Szeemann

ITINERARY

Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 9 May–15 June 1969; Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 28 August–27 September 1969

ARTISTS

Carl Andre, Giovanni Anselmo, Richard Artschwager, Thomas Bang, Jared Bark, Robert Barry, Joseph Beuys, Mel Bochner, Alighiero Boetti, Marinus Boezem, Bill Bollinger, Michael Buthe, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Paul Cotton, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Rafael Ferrer, Barry Flanagan, Ted Glass, Hans Haacke, Eva Hesse, Douglas Huebler, Paolo Icaro, Alain Jacquet, Neil Jenney, Stephen Kaltenbach, Jo Ann Kaplan, Edward Kienholz, Yves Klein, Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis, Gary B. Kuehn, Sol LeWitt, Bernd Lohaus, Richard Long, Roelof Louw, Bruce McLean, David Medalla, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Panamarenko, Pino Pascali, Paul Pechter, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Emilio Prini, Markus Raetz, Allen Ruppersberg, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Robert Ryman, Fred Sandback, Alan Saret, Sarkis, Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Keith Sonnier, Richard Tuttle, Frank Lincoln Viner, Aldo Walker, Franz Erhard Walther, William G. Wegman, Lawrence Weiner, William T. Wiley, Gilberto Zorio

EXHIBITION CATALOG

Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form: Works–Concepts–Processes–Situations–Information. *Bern and London: Kunsthalle Bern and ICA, 1969.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 68
Number of works: ca.127
Total number of visitors: unknown

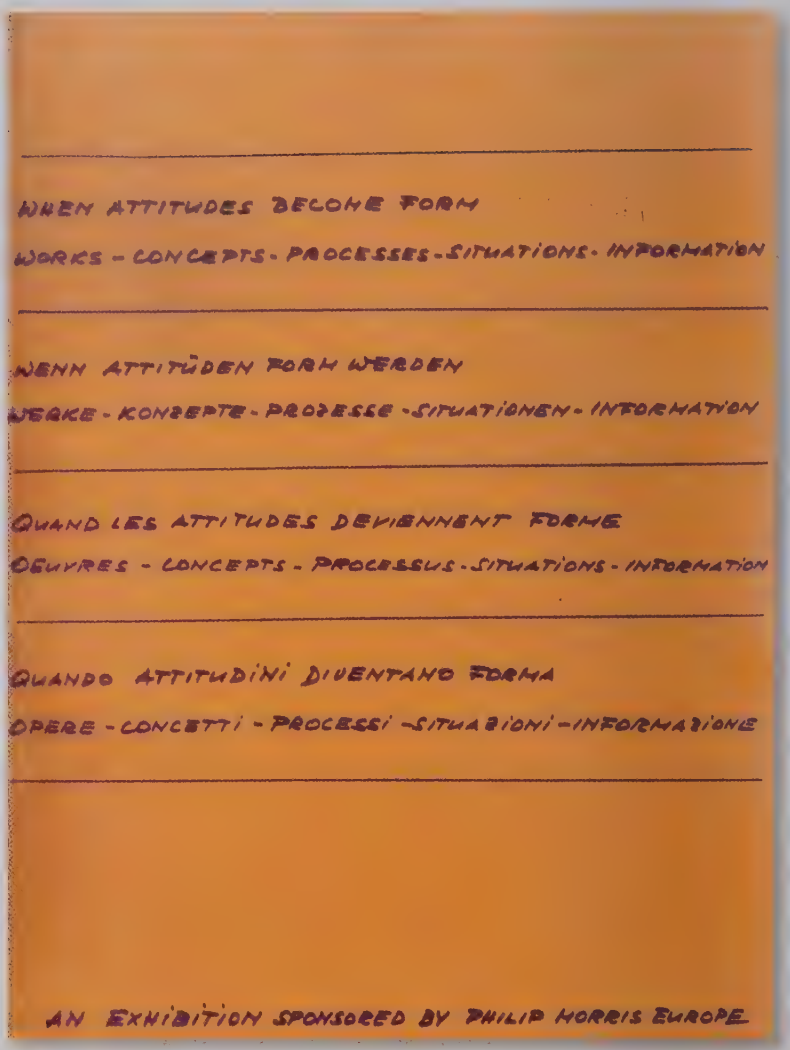
As both foundational event and conceptual model, "When Attitudes Become Form" holds a special place in the curatorial imagination. It was the exhibition that brought international acclaim to the most important curator of the post-war period, Harald Szeemann. And it was the show that led Szeemann to re-create himself as an independent exhibition-maker, founding a career path that would be followed by generations of curators. "Attitudes" has also come to represent the romantic conception of the curator as inspired partner of the artist, a creative actor who generates original ideas and structures through which art enters public consciousness.

Szeemann was an advocate for the new art that emerged in the 1960s, work grounded in an "inner attitude" elevating artistic process over final product. Across the diversity of Conceptualism, land art, American Post-Minimalism, and Italian Arte Povera, he also experienced a desire to be free of a system supplying aesthetic objects for the wealthy. He displayed this attitude and this aspiration by turning the Kunsthalle Bern into a giant artists' studio, accommodating the practical demands of process-based art through Piero Gilardi's idea of the exhibition as workshop and locus of discussion.

Ironically, Szeemann's radical project was funded by Phillip Morris Europe. The previous July he had been offered support for a traveling exhibition by the public relations firm Ruder&Finn, orchestrator of the corporation's involvement with contemporary art. Inspired later that month by work in Jan Dibbets's Amsterdam studio, his research led to an extended trip to the United States in December. Among much else Szeemann saw the exhibition that Robert Morris curated in Leo Castelli's warehouse, all nine of whose artists he included in "Attitudes." Capturing the ethos of the 1960s, Keith Sonnier contributed the phrase atop the catalog title page: "Live in Your Head." The catalog alluded to Szeemann's process as well as to that of the artists, containing the address list he used in New York and letters responding to his invitations to exhibit. But his detailed curatorial diary appeared elsewhere, in the catalog to a parallel exhibition that opened a week earlier at the Stedelijk Museum. Curated by Wim Beeren, "Op Losse Schroeven" ("Square Pegs in Round Holes") presented a similar sensibility and brought to Amsterdam the American artists who were coming to Bern. All but two of its thirty-two artists were in "Attitudes."

Some of the same works were in both shows, with Richard Serra splashing lead on the outside of the Stedelijk and in the Kusthalle foyer, and Jan Dibbets excavating the corners of both buildings to expose their foundations. Extension of the exhibition outside the galleries was another common feature, including in Bern Michael Heizer's smashed sidewalk outside the museum and Richard Artschwager's lozenge-shaped *blps* placed throughout the town. Without being invited, Daniel Buren pasted his signature stripes around Bern, and then was arrested. Illegality was compounded with the burning of military uniforms outside the museum, which wasn't part of the show but was associated by the public with it.

The conservative Swiss public did not react well to "Attitudes." There was mockery in cartoons and written vituperation, punctuated by the dumping of manure at the entrance. Despite positive international reviews, the museum canceled Szeemann's planned Joseph Beuys show. He soon resigned as director, embarking on a life of independent curatorial activity. Szeemann traveled to Krefeld to see the German version, and to London to see "Attitudes" at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), mounted by Charles Harrison with expanded British representation. But only in Bern was the show fully Szeemann's, and as realized at the Kunsthalle, it became a curatorial landmark.


WHEN ATTITUDES BECOME FORM
WORKS - CONCEPTS - PROCESSES - SITUATIONS - INFORMATION
WENN ATTITÜDEN FORM WERDEN
WERKE - KONZEPTE - PROZESSE - SITUATIONEN - INFORMATION
QUAND LES ATTITUDES DEVIENNENT FORME
OEUVRES - CONCEPTS - PROCESSUS - SITUATIONS - INFORMATION
QUANDO ATTITUDINI DIVENTANO FORMA
OPERE - CONCETTI - PROCESSI - SITUAZIONI - INFORMAZIONE
AN EXHIBITION SPONSORED BY PHILIP MORRIS EUROPE

↑ Poster for the exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form," designed by Balthasar Burkhard and Harald Szeemann.

↗ Cover of the exhibition catalog, *When Attitudes Become Form*, 1969.

↗ Harald Szeemann, curator of "When Attitudes Become Form," standing outside Kunsthalle Bern, 1969.

→ Ger van Elk working on *Replacement Piece*, for which he removed 3 square feet (1 square meter) from the ground outside the Kunsthalle and replaced it with a photograph of the same piece of ground taken before it was removed.

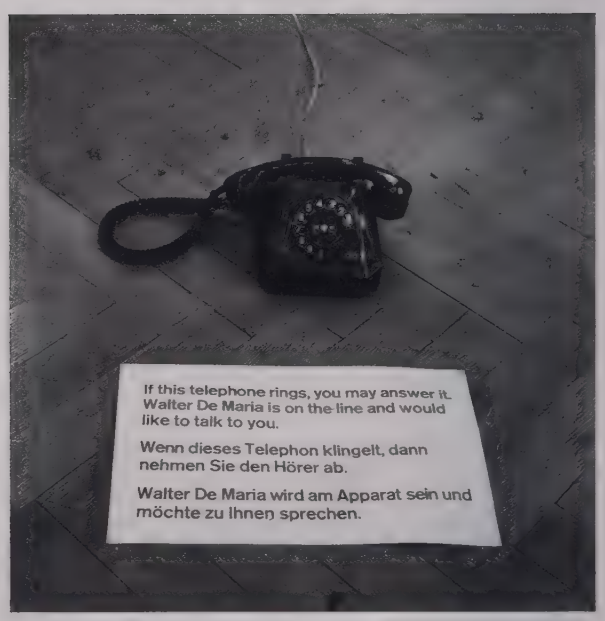
↗↗ Hanging on the wall is Richard Serra's *Belt Piece*, below which is his lead *Splash Piece*. Only a week before the Bern opening, Serra had installed his splashed lead piece at the Stedelijk in Amsterdam as part of the exhibition "Op Losse Schroeven." In the top right is one of Richard Arschwager's lozenge-shaped *blps*.

→→ Richard Serra's *Shovel Plate, Prop, Close Pin Prop*, and *Sign Board Prop*.

↓ View of the exhibition in the main hall. In the foreground is Eva Hesse's *Augment* and Bill Bollinger's two *Pipe Pieces*. In the background are works by Markus Raetz, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Richard Tuttle, Richard Artschwager, Keith Sonnier, Walter De Maria, and Alan Saret.

↓ The main hall, with (from left) one of Richard Artschwager's *blps*, Richard Tuttle's *Pale Purple Canvas*, and Eva Hesse's series of conjoined rubber boxes, *Sans III*; her *Augment* is just visible in the foreground.

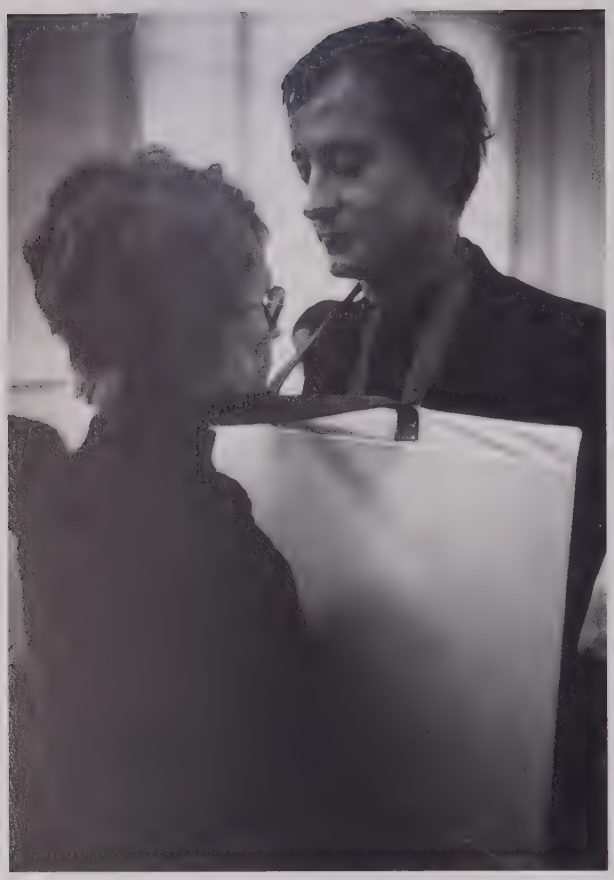
↘ Walter De Maria's *Art by Telephone*.


If this telephone rings, you may answer it. Walter De Maria is on the line and would like to talk to you.
Wenn dieses Telephon klingelt, dann nehmen Sie den Hörer ab.
Walter De Maria wird am Apparat sein und möchte zu Ihnen sprechen.

↗ View of the room adjacent to the main hall. On the left, leaning against the wall, is Mario Merz's *Appoggiati;* the box on the floor is his *Sit-In*, which was previously shown at "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere" (see p. 67). The figure-shaped sculpture on the floor is Alighiero Boetti's *Me sunbathing in Turin 19 January 1969*, which is made of 101 pieces of concrete. Also on the floor is Barry Flanagan's *Two Space Rope Sculpture*. At the back of the room is Robert Morris's *Felt Piece No. 4*. On the right are three works by Bruce Nauman: the floor piece is *Collection of Various Flexible Materials Separated by Layers of Grease with Holes the size of my Waist and Wrists*, and on the wall at the back right are *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten Inch Intervals* and *Untitled*.

→ Claes Oldenburg's three works from the early to mid-1960s: *Model (Ghost) Medicine Cabinet, Street Head II*, and *Pants Pocket with Pocket Objects*.

→→ Joesph Beuys installing his *Fat Corner*.



↑ Franz Erhard Walther and a participant wearing one of his *Objects*.

↗ Franz Erhard Walther's *Objects* as installed at the Bern exhibition.

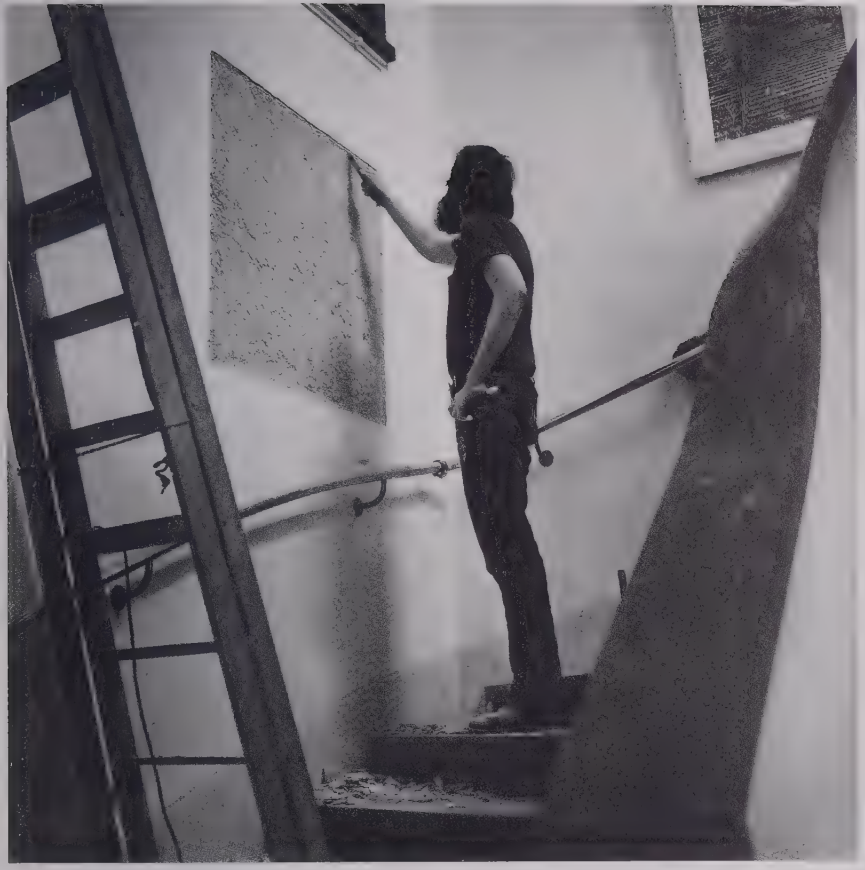
→ Gilberto Zorio's *Rushes and Torches* consisted of flaming torches that were suspended on a line above the ground; the piece was designed so that it would eventually collapse.

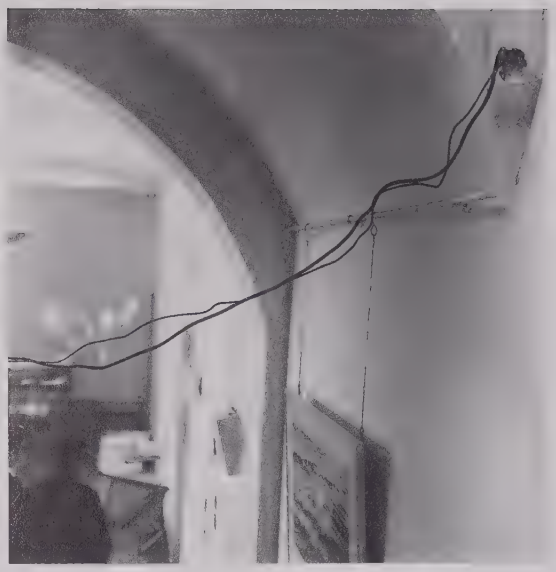
↗↗ Lawrence Weiner creating *A 36" x 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall*, which he had previously installed in the "January 5–31, 1969" exhibition (see p. 86).

↗↗↗ Alain Jacquet exposed the electrical wires of the Kunsthalle and then left them hanging. He had executed a similar work at Yvon Lambert's gallery in Paris earlier in 1969.

→→ Giovanni Anselmo installing his untitled work, a steel-framed pool filled with water, chalk, and bricks.

→→→ The lower gallery, with Mario Merz's igloo, *Acqua scivola (Igloo di vetro)*, and untitled works by Giovanni Anselmo on the wall.





↗ Although Daniel Buren took part in "When Attitudes Become Form" in Bern, he was never formally invited. He was arrested by Swiss police for covering numerous billboards in the city with his light-pink striped posters.

→ As an uninvited contribution to "When Attitudes Become Form" and as a protest against compulsory military service, writer Peter Saam and artist Hanspeter Jost burned their military uniforms on Helvetiaplatz, in front of the Kunsthalle Bern, on 23 March 1969.

DIARY AND TRAVELOG OF THE PREPARATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES, AND ONLY OF THESE, FOR THE EXHIBITION "WHEN ATTITUDES BECOME FORM" (WORKS-CONCEPTS-PROCESSES-SITUATIONS-INFORMATION)

Harald Szeemann

13 July 1968 — Visit by Nina Kaiden, Director of Fine Arts, Ruder & Finn, New York, and Jean-Marie Theubet from Philip Morris in Lausanne. During lunch, they explain that they would like me to organize an international exhibition, for which Philip Morris would provide me with $15,000 for the preparation and $10,000 for the catalog. For the exhibition we have in mind: "New Experiments with Light"; that is, especially, the anonymous light shows and the artists from Los Angeles. I agree, but retain the right to choose the theme, since the Kunsthalle had already presented a number of light experiments in 1965 in the exhibition "Light and Movement." In addition, I wanted to put together something completely new—once again to create a new climate—out of which, in the years to come, a series of retrospectives could emerge; that is to say, an exhibition that would bring something new to Bern and, at the same time, could also be taken on by other museums.

Because this was a condition of our agreement, I am free in terms of compilation, i.e. selection of artists and works, but the exhibition must travel.

20 July 1968 — Opening of "12 Environments."

21 July 1968 — Flight to Amsterdam for the preparation of the exhibition "Junge Kunst aus Holland" ("Recent Art from Holland").

22 July 1968 — I visit the Studio-House in Amsterdam to select paintings by [Reinier] Lucassen. Next door to him, another artist has his studio—a man who helps Lucassen during his presentation. I also enter his studio space, since I cannot find the door to exit.

THE GESTURE

The real story actually begins here. In the beginning was (Jan) Dibbets's gesture to water a lawn on a table. But you cannot exhibit gestures. Nevertheless, Dibbets told me about two other artists in Holland—Ger van Elk and his rope and tent constructions, and Marinus Boezem, the air sculptor—and the Englishman Richard Long and his cross-country markings. And in Italy, an artist who has become known for his polyurethane tapestries of gardens and seascapes decided to terminate his oeuvre and make the new artists his art, so to speak; by providing information about them: Piero Gilardi—also a Swiss. On the same day, I informed my colleague Edy de Wilde that, instead of the new experiments with light, my project would now be to present this "new art."

26 July 1968 — Return flight from Amsterdam to Bern. In the library of the Kunsthalle, I look for information on the new artists; but, aside from small invitations, there is nothing to be found.

August 1968 — I write to Nina Kaiden with my proposal for the exhibition: a confrontation of the artists of the Cold Poetic Image, who had already hinted at the new problems in their works ([Marcel] Duchamp as father, then [Öyvind] Fahlstrom, [Carl] Andre, [Michelangelo] Pistoletto, [Dan] Flavin), with the "new" artists.

September 1968 — The month goes by quickly with the preparations for the Kunsthalle's anniversary and the exhibition "20 Jahre Kunstpflege der Stadt Bern" ("20 Years of Service to Art by the City of Bern").

October 1968 — The documentation is complete. On the list fifty names. A further trip to Holland to settle the list of works for the exhibition "Recent Art from Holland." Dibbets, Boezem and van Elk are at the conference in Amalfi: "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere." I make an appointment to see them on 19 November in van Elk's studio in Velp.

30 October 1968 — Installation of the exhibition "Recent Art from Holland." Exchange of information with van Elk, Dibbets, and Boezem. The list now seems to be complete, and I wait for the green light from Philip Morris to begin making studio visits.

5 November 1968 — The telegram arrives: "Exhibition idea accepted." Decision to go to New York in December.

2–9 November 1968 — Together with de Wilde, I visit the studios of the Swiss artists. Before his departure I show him the complete Philip Morris exhibition project.

10 November 1968 — Visit with [Yaacov] Agam to discuss his solo exhibition for March–April 1969. Agam prefers to postpone his exhibition for one year. The decision is made in that moment.

12 November 1968 — The rush begins here. Supper with Pierre Gaudibert, curator at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. I offer him the exhibition as first venue. He cannot make a final decision, however, because he wants to take on the Bern [Jesus Rafael] Soto exhibition in the same time slot. 10 P.M.: On the same evening, I visit the studio of Sarkis, who, following his glue paintings, now decorates metal bowls with water, photographs, neon, lamps, and roofing felt.

13 November 1968 — Visit with Jean Clay and Christiane Duparc, the art critics of Realités Nouvelles and [Le] Nouvel Observateur, to whom I present the complete exhibition project. — 3 A.M.: Last drink in La Coupole.

14 November 1968 — 8 A.M.: Visit with Daniel Buren, who develops his theories of an anonymous art image or me. Buren always produces and exhibits the same striped posters. An art which is conceived somewhere by someone but is never signed. — MIDNIGHT: With the art critic Gregoire Muller. He will go to America in December to visit the same artists.

17 November 1968 — Travel to Dusseldorf for curators' conference. I present my exhibition project with reference to the favorable conditions for taking it on.

18 November 1968 — Visit with Konrad Fischer-Lueg, who completes my list of addresses and provides me with the first valuable telephone numbers. Curators' conference. — 8 P.M.: Visit to the Carl Andre exhibition in the Stadtisches Museum, Monchengladbach [Germany], together with Jean Leering, Director of the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven [the Netherlands], and Jean-Christophe Ammann. — 10 P.M.: Visit with Johannes Cladders at his house in Krefeld. Discussion about [Joseph] Beuys as well as, again and again, the "museum of today." — MIDNIGHT: Last drink in [Daniel] Spoerri's restaurant. 2–6 A.M.: Nightime conversation with Jean Leering.

19 November 1968 — NOON: [Alfred] Schmela celebrates his fiftieth birthday. — 1:30 P.M.: With the TEE to Utrecht to visit the "Environments" exhibition with works from Bern, including [Klaus] Rinke's water sack, the rings of the Groupe de Recherche [d'Art Visuel], Fischer-Lueg's phosphorus wall, and [Lutz] Mommartz's double-screen cinema. 6 P.M.: At the train station in Arnhem, van Elk and Gilardi are expecting me; supper at van Elk's home. — 9 P.M.: Arrival of Dibbets and Boezem. The night of discussion at van Elk's place revolves less around the necessity of the exhibition than around the way it should be carried through. Gilardi wanted to see the whole thing as an assembly of artists, from which the exhibition would then naturally emerge: no shipping of works, no art dealers, but rather the results of discussions among artists and the self-criticism of the museum. The title of the exhibition should thus be as noncommittal as possible, rather than a new hit that postulates a movement again. For my part, I was able to assure them that each artist would be represented in the way he feels appropriate, and only when an artist wants me to select him will I do this. The exhibition really shouldn't simply reinforce the idea of the museum as a temple, but rather bear witness to the fact that, done in the same spirit, different things can develop. — MIDNIGHT: Nocturnal walk through the forest to help facilitate the convergence of the various points of view.

20 November 1968 — 9 A.M.: Continuation of the discussion with Gilardi. He sees the artist no longer as a victim of psychoanalytical and sociological obligations and obstacles, but rather as the executor of the "whole being," that is to say, no longer as a mechanical outgrowth of the contemporary system. — NOON: Return to Dusseldorf. — 5 P.M.: Discussion about the exhibition "4 Freunde" ("4 Friends").

21 November 1968 — 3 P.M.: Visit with Rolf Ricke in Cologne. He represents [Richard] Serra, [Keith] Sonnier, [Gary] Kuehn, [Richard] Artschwager, and [Bill] Bollinger in Europe. His cooperation on the exhibition is secure, and he prepares "his" artists for my visit. — 8 P.M.: Return to Zurich and Bern.

22 November–12 December 1968 — Preparation of trips, announcements, deinstallation of "Junge Hollander" [i.e. "Recent Art from Holland"], and installation of the traditional Christmas exhibition.

5 December 1968 — 10 P.M.: Meeting of the exhibition committee. Announcement of Agam's postponement and the proposal of the Philip Morris exhibition. The artists' names are barely known here. Reservations, especially on the part of the artist members, on the grounds that the Kunsthalle is selling itself out to an American corporation, can be dispelled after it is pointed out that the curator alone is responsible for the organization of the exhibition. Nevertheless, it is expressed that the exhibition will provide much to talk and write about.

8 December 1968 — Flight to New York. Setting up in the Chelsea Hotel.

9 December 1968 — 9 A.M.–5 P.M.: Arrangement of the first rendezvous from the Chelsea and the office of Nina Kaiden. 7 P.M.: Franz Erhard Walther—his "objects as instruments" must be shown—but how? These are private objects, which are not meant to be presented, but are rather intended to function only in a particular situation. In the end, we decide to exhibit them packed and labeled, with instructions on the walls. Students from the School of Applied Arts will then present one object at a time—with or without an audience.

10 December 1968 — 11 A.M.–6 P.M.: Establish contact with the galleries and complete the telephone list. — 6 P.M.–8 P.M.: With [Alain] Jacquet, who currently has an exhibition at Waddell. — 8 P.M.–3 A.M.: Visit with Christo, who can soon pack his second museum

11 December 1968 — 11 A.M.: Visit with [Shusaku] Arakawa. The original exhibition idea of confronting the artists of the Cold Poetic Image (as Schwarz calls it) with the Naturburschen (Nature Boys) is dropped because of the abundance of the latter. — 4 P.M.: Visit the exhibition in [Leo] Castelli's warehouse. With the exception of the Italians [Giovanni] Anselmo and [Gilberte] Zorio, whose works are still at customs, I see here the contributions, selected by Bob Morris, of Bollinger, Eva Hesse, [Stephen] Kaltenbach, [Bruce] Nauman, [Alan] Saret, Serra, and Sonnier. — 6 P.M.: Scotch with Roy Lichtenstein.

12 December 1968 — NOON: Dick Bellamy, with his intensive absence-presence, helps a great deal. He sees this new art anchored in a New York tradition beginning with [Jackson) Pollock and extending to the Happenings, [Claes] Oldenburg, [Robert] Whitman, and [Allan] Kaprow.

13 December 1968 — 12.30–3 P.M.: Long discussion with Bruce Nauman. He differentiates clearly between "private and public pieces." The exhibition must have both of these dimensions. After the audience has been taught cooperation, participation—indeed even direct action—the finer differentiations now have to be demonstrated

once again from a distance. The exhibition as an accumulation of objects and situations to be seen from various distances? Leo Castelli added [Robert) Rauschenberg, [James) Rosenquist, and Jasper Johns to the suggestions made by Bellamy. He thinks, like all the artists, like the people from Philip Morris, that a title has to be found. Until now, I only know what it shouldn't be: "Anti-Form" is too negative, "Microemotive" (Gilardi's expression) is incomprehensible. — 4.30 P.M.: Bob Morris. His newest work is a scattering of the most varied materials across the floor. With small mirrors, the flow of these materials is divided up for the eye, but not disrupted. Should this work be completed, he will send me all the details, so that we can make it in the Kunsthalle with Swiss steel wool and copper wire. Otherwise, I will choose two of his felt pieces in Paris. He sees this new art as an interaction of work and material from the point of view of a changing external form. — 6:30 P.M.: Joseph Kosuth. As a Conceptualist, he scorns giving his ideas sensual form. His works are thoughts about art; he makes blocks of text with key phrases or, as in Bern, places four advertisements in the local newspaper. Everyone in Bern has a Kosuth without even knowing it. "Art works for everybody in local newspapers." — 7:30 P.M.: Together with Kosuth, visit Seth Siegelaub and John Wendler, the editors of the Xerox book with contributions by Andre, Kosuth, Morris, [Lawrence] Weiner, and others. — 8:30 P.M.: Michael Heizer. With him, it is no longer about the exhibition. His works in the desert are fascinating traces. In the initial phase, he carved forms conceived by himself into the ground as a violation of nature. Recently, the trace in the desert is more important to him than impressing his style onto nature. Heizer is a motorcycle fan. Many of the traces have been carved over the tracks of his motorcycle—without beginning and without end.

14 December 1968 — 8:30 A.M.: Seth Siegelaub. He represents the group of conceptual artists: [Robert] Barry, [Douglas) Huebler, Kosuth, and Weiner. On these artists, one can only provide information. Barry produces relationships between things by means of nylon strings or a tone. Huebler marks sites in the open country, which are then captured photographically. His work for Bern: the segment of space described by a parcel that is continually forwarded. Like Kosuth, he employs systems that already exist, but the functions of which can be changed in such a way that they exist without comment. With his statements, Weiner provides instructions on how to make a work of art. Whether it is actually made or not no longer has any influence on the idea of the work. — 10:30 A.M.: Eva Hesse. She is an old acquaintance. As early as 1964, she had already created her first examples of "soft sculptures" in Germany. Her first solo exhibition in the Fischbach Gallery was a success. She has since achieved great freedom with regard to materials and the use of these in the presentation of her art. I select Aught + Augment from the "Castelli Warehouse Show." — 11:30 A.M.: Bob Ryman. Too bad I didn't know him earlier. He is a superb painter, and I will choose one of the drawings exhibited in Konrad Fischer's gallery (pieces of paper glued directly onto the wall). — 12:30 P.M.: Frank Lincoln Viner. He has been playing with plastic for years. Since no one purchased his work, he made the most colorful plastic clothes. His works betray a carefree hippie spirit. He will be represented by two colorful and lively wall decorations. — 2:00 P.M.: Alan Saret. His sculptures of various kinds of colored wire mesh are like Pollock paintings in space. The problem is simple: which sculpture can be transported? — 4:00 P.M.: Stephen Kaltenbach. He is a typical West Coast artist. He dreams of pure, light-flooded environments in his Secret Studio; in his apartment, however, he proposes things that are not yet identified as art: for Bern a text and a rubber stamp with the imprint of his lips. — 5:30 P.M.: Bill Bollinger. His dry art is more difficult to understand. Wire mesh, soap, pipes. But the act of selection on the part of the sculptor is felt everywhere, even with his black forms sprayed directly onto the wall. I immediately take the Rope Piece (1967) with me. I'll encounter shipping problems with the loans from Ricke. — 8:00 P.M.: David Lee. He makes environments with colored sheets of Plexiglas, which he uses according to a particular plan: with the help of a template, a given space is marked with curves, according to which he cuts his Plexiglas sheets, and then hangs them in the space. Spatial changes through layered, colorful, transparent surfaces. For this exhibition, I'll have to do without him; but for "Kunst nach Planen" ("Art According to Plans") he will be an appropriate collaborator.

15 December 1968 — 10 A.M.: Richard Serra. There are always those situations, when, upon entering a studio, one actually smells a good artist. With his *Floor*, *Splash*, and *Lead Pieces*, Serra had, already at Castelli's, impressed me the most. He wants to know everything about the exhibition, and with his direct punch, he casts new light on many aspects. I will try to get a ticket for him, so that he can make new works right on site in Bern, especially the *Splash Piece* (21 kilograms hot lead) [1968]. From Cologne I will get the large Belt Piece as a key work for the exhibition. — NOON: Lunch with the van der Marcks, Runqvists and Jacquets. — 2:30 P.M.: Water and Wind—afternoon with Hans Haacke. Although the new snow has destroyed the demonstration on the roof of the studio, a new work was created: Wind and Water. Snow. — 4:00 P.M.: With Dennis Oppenheim I visit Willoughby Sharp, who is now working through each of the four elements in exhibitions. This is a misunderstanding: Earth is a bunch of nonsense. — 8:00 P.M.: Keith Sonnier. Together with Serra, he formulates the new tendencies most succinctly. With Serra, everything is power, and with Sonnier a brilliant, playful elegance. For his works as well—partially torn-down surfaces glued to the wall and braced with cord—his presence in Bern is unavoidable.

16 December 1968 — NOON: [Edward F.] Fry from the Guggenheim Museum tells me that, in March, he will also present an exhibition with artists of the AntiForm movement. — 2:30 P.M.: Neil Jenney. He is nervous. He shows me earlier works—metal rods

covered in colored plastic. All the new works have remained in Cologne with Zwirner. — 7 P.M.: Opening of the "Sculpture Annual" at the Whitney.

17 December 1968 — 10 A.M.: Into the country to see Gary Kuehn in New Jersey. Armed with a broom, he sweeps the snow off his sculptures in the forest. Unfortunately, the best ones—collapsed piles of boxes soaked in tar—cannot be shipped, although they look "soft." — 6 P.M.: Rafael Ferrer is the man who, in one day, deposited leaves at three sites: in the stairwell of the Castelli Warehouse exhibition in the foyer of the Castelli Gallery, and in the elevator of the gallery house (Dwan, Fischbach, de Nagy) at 29 West 57th Street.He brings his information to Chelsea, which, despite the snow and biting cold, has not been heated for days. The reason: the oil delivery companies are on strike.

18 December 1968 — 10 A.M.: Richard Artschwager. He wants to place his blps in Bern as well. Blps are anonymous forms—such as a mailbox opening—which are made of various materials and—sometimes autonomously, sometimes as a commentary—are glued by the artist onto the walls of various sites. He proposes as a title: "Weak Interactions." — NOON: Nina Kaiden. She is Director of Fine Arts for Ruder & Finn, the advertising firm of Philip Morris, and had the splendid idea in July of commissioning me to do the exhibition, that is to say, of giving me the money to be able to do the exhibition. Her primary concern is to finally come up with a title. And what do you know: "When Attitudes Become Form" comes up all by itself during our conversation. — 3 P.M.: Sol LeWitt. With him and Carl Andre, the question is whether artists who "collaborated" on the Minimal art exhibitions should also be included in my exhibition. Did the "attitudes" only lead to soft forms? Sol LeWitt's wall markings actually have as ephemeral a character as Serra's *Splash Piece*. And, with his floor pieces, Andre makes us experience the whole space by making us concentrate on the floor. In any event, this expansion prevents the exhibition from propagating a new style, and the constant differentiation between organic and geometric will be underscored. "When Attitudes Become Form"—this was, of course, always the case, but the process was never exemplified so directly. — 5:15 P.M.: Visit Bates Lowry. The Museum of Modern Art [New York] is also preparing an exhibition with the same artists, but with a focus on methods and materials. Naturally, all these artists need many materials, old and new, but the faith in the material is no longer the same as it was two years ago, when everything that was thought to be contemporary had to be made of polyester. The use of materials is more natural here, and should be seen as a logical extension of the gesture. — 6:15 P.M.: With Nicholas Wilder in the Dorset Hotel. The active gallery owner from the West Coast outlines an entire panorama of West Coast art. It is his opinion that "Funk art" and the materialization through light practiced by several Los Angeles artists are born out of the same artistic intention— conceptualization. — 8 P.M.: Frederick Lane Sandback. With cords that are anchored in the wall and floor, he draws stereometric bodies in space, which, two-dimensionally, can be seen as panels leaned against the wall, and three-dimensionally, as bodies pushed against the wall. In both cases, however, the same space flows through the imaginary surfaces, and the highly simple structure becomes ambiguous. As with Andre and Sol LeWitt, I select one work. — 9:30 P.M.: Bob Gordon. The shy black artist made me come twice for nothing. Now we finally meet. He wants to participate, shows me drawings, photographs, unfinished works, but does not want to pin himself down. We thus leave everything open.

19 December 1968 — 11 A.M.: Visit John Gibson, who sells art in his office on 67th Street on the basis of slides and models. He has his problems as well. — NOON: Once again with Dick Bellamy. — 1 P.M.: Once again with Leo Castelli. I acquaint them with the title and composition of the exhibition. Also with regard to the predecessors, I want to avoid references that function all too anecdotally and decide to place only Oldenburg and Beuys at the beginning. Oldenburg because of the use of primitive, everyday, and new materials, as well as the blurring of the terms "hard" and "soft" in the service of a reproduction; and Beuys as the creator of speculative and material atmospheres. — 3 P.M.: Another glass with Heizer. — 4 P.M.: Selection of the cloths by [Richard] Tuttle at Betty Parsons Gallery. — 7 P.M.: Farewell drink with Gregoire Muller, the Jacquets, and [George] Sugarman.

20 December 1968 — Flight to San Francisco. Telephone call from Serra, who gives me the advice to visit North Beach at night.

21 December 1968 — 8 A.M.: With the first Greyhound across the Golden Gate Bridge to Wood Acre. — 9 A.M.: William T. Wiley. He lives deep in the forest and creates trenchant situations, in which statics and aggressive airiness meet. He filmed Blondino together with Bob Nelson. — 10 A.M.: Exhibition in the San Francisco Art Institute with works by James Bond Mason, an old Australian pacifist, who exhibits panels with appeal and works from his garden here. — 11 A.M.: Jim Melchert. — 1 P.M.: Paul Cotton. A mystical hippie. His bedroom is a theater, his apartment a private kindergarten. He creates objects on the edge of the mirror, private situations, like the passage through canvases, or the table on which two people with two of exactly the same objects can play mirror image. Like most of the people in San Francisco, his own physical measurements play a large role in his works. — 4 P.M.: Don Potts. I know his objects, tightly arched hollow forms, which were exhibited in the "Eccentric Abstraction" show. For two years, he has been working on an automobile of his own design, the combination of a racing car with bicycle wheels, which he wants to exhibit at the Oakland inventors' convention. — 6 P.M.–MIDNIGHT: With Harold Persico Paris and Jerry Belaine.

22 December 1968 — Flight to Los Angeles. Guest at the home of the Reinshagens, friends from my first visit to New York in 1963. — 10 P.M.: The Betty Freeman Collection.

23 December 1968 — 10 A.M.: Edward Kienholz. A real Swiss has to live in the mountains. And this he does. With a view over Los Angeles. Kienholz will be represented in the exhibition with a Concept Tableau from 1966—I select for obvious reasons the American Trip, since it was made in collaboration with [Jean] Tinguely. Kienholz also loans for the exhibition an early Nauman and an immaterial work by Yves Klein, whose story he will write for the catalog, if Yves's widow permits this. — 11 A.M.–MIDNIGHT: The collector Eugenia Butler drives me to the studios of [Allen] Ruppersberg, [Ed] Ruscha, Joe Goode, and Peter Alexander. From there, I go with Eva to visit Ron Cooper and the Buder Collection. In the evening with Larry Bell, Bob Irwin, and in the Betty Asher Collection.

24 December 1968 — 10 A.M.–7 P.M.: Exhibition of [H.C.] Westermann and [Billy Al] Bengston in the Los Angeles County Museum. Discussion with Maurice Tuchman. Visit the galleries open on Christmas. Studio visits with Douglas Wheeler, (Billy Al) Bengston, Vija Celmins, Mike Asher, Craig Kaufman, and Tim Rudnick. The most striking thing about the Los Angeles artists is their search for light and an appealing surface effect. This search for light can run through all stages: the dissolution of colur through light in Peter Alexander's cast polyester forms, the illumination of a surface through thirty-five layers of polyester perfectly balanced in color by Ron Cooper, the use of artificial light sources to blur the boundaries of pictures by Wheeler, the creation of light-shade forms by (Robert) Irwin, and with (James) Turrell the creation of bodies in space through light. New York and Los Angeles are like Firenze and Venezia (a short time ago). — 7 P.M.: Flight to Las Vegas. — 8 P.M.–MIDNIGHT: Recovering from the Mexican flu in the Apache Motel. — MIDNIGHT–7 A.M.: Gamble (win $90).

25 December 1968 — Christmas. Flight to Dallas.

26 December 1968 — Visit the [John F.] Kennedy marker. Check the angle of shooting. Warren Report theory impossible. A few drinks and nudist film in Elm Street. Flight to Chicago. In the evening with Nick Morgenthaler, the architect from Bern.

27 December 1968 — Lunch with Jan van der Marck, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Visit the Art Institute. — 6 P.M.: Airport closed. Return to Chicago.

28 December 1968 — 5 A.M.: Wake up.
9 A.M.: Aeroplane does not take off.
11 A.M.: The captain arrives.
NOON: Flight to New York.
2 P.M.: Cannot land.
3 P.M.: In Washington.
3 P.M.–9 P.M.: I read two books.
9 P.M.: Our plane has to be replaced.
MIDNIGHT: Flight to New York.

29 December 1968 —
2 P.M.: Once again with Michael Heizer.
5 P.M.: Claes Oldenburg. He agrees to participate. Using photographs, we select appropriate early works.
9 P.M.: Carl Andre. It's going to be a long night, because Serra has joined us.

30 December 1968 —
9 A.M.: Pick up the Bollinger Rope Piece. Telephone calls to people I definitely should have visited.
6 P.M.: Flight to Zurich.

31 December 1968 —
7 A.M.: Arrive in Zurich.
10 A.M.: Arrive in Bern, drop off the US laundry.
2 P.M.: Depart for Geneva.
5 P.M.: Flight to Paris.
7 P.M.: In Paris.

2 January 1969 — 5 P.M.: With Ileana Sonnabend, the entire exhibition is talked through again. She confirms the participation of her artists. — 6 P.M.: In the hotel with Gregoire Muller. — 7 P.M.: Pierre Gaudibert joins us. We go through all the photographic material again. He cannot present the exhibition in 1969, but reserves a time slot for 1970.

3 January 1969 — 6 P.M.: Studio visit and supper with Alain Jacquet, who will participate in the exhibition with a walled-in electronic cable.

4 January 1969 — Flight to Zurich.
6 P.M.: Travel to Bern with [Blaise] Gautier from the C.N.A.C. 41. — MIDNIGHT–4 A.M.: Studio visits with [Markus] Raetz, (Jean-Frederic] Schnyder, and [Roland] Werro.

5–8 January 1969 — Correspondence.

9 January 1969 — Depart for Milan. 6 P.M.: Visit the publisher Mazzotta. He is doing a book on Arte Povera and keeps my photographs. The title of the book is a problem. They want to perhaps use mine; *Quando attitudini diventano forma (opera, concetti, processi, situazioni, informazione).* — 11 P.M.: Depart for Turin. Compile the insert for the photographic catalog.

10 January 1969 — 3 P.M.: Visit [Gian] Enzo Sperone with Zorio. 6 P.M.: Visit Mario Merz. — 8 P.M.: With Piero Gilardi. — 9 P.M.: Visit Mario Merz with Piero Gilardi.

11 January 1969 — 10:30 A.M.: With Piero Gilardi. — 11:30 A.M.: Anselmo. — 12:30 P.M.: Lunch with Sperone, Merz, Anselmo, and [Alighiero e] Boetti. — 2 P.M.: Visit Pistoletto. 3 P.M.: Visit Boetti. — 5 P.M.: Depart for Genoa. — 8:30 P.M.: Supper with [Paolo] Icaro and [Emilio] Prini. The situation in Turin is extraordinarily positive, because these artists create a climate and because they have the courage to create complicated works which lack the legendary Italian lightness. The situation is also negative, because they make their works only for ten people. Prini and Icaro in Genoa are in a better situation. They know that they are alone. Who impressed me the most was Mario Merz, whose "gestures" are the "most natural" and give testimony to an obsession with his need to express himself, which is lacking with the others. It is agreed with the Italian artists that they should continue working until 20 February and send the works

created last to Bern. The selection phobia and the preservation of their private spheres goes so far that Prini and Icaro do not even want to show me their studios and earlier works.

12 January 1969 — 9 A.M.: Depart for Bologna. 2 P.M.: [Pier Paolo] Calzolari just drove to Urbino. — 3 P.M.: Depart for Rome.

13 January 1969 — As always in Rome, you can only meet people in the evening. [Fabio] Sargentini and [Jannis] Kounellis show me the new Galleria Cattico, a garage, first exhibition: 12 circus horses. Sargentini has rendered extraordinary services to the "Attitudes" artists. Without his commitment to [Pino] Pascali, who unfortunately died too young, and Kounellis, Rome would hardly have been worth visiting—except for the well-known Rome of the tourists. His garage is certainly the best gallery space right now, with ramps, a control office, and especially the walls and floor, which have seen other things.

14 January 1969 — 6 A.M.: Flight to London. In the aeroplane are a hundred Australian teenagers. One automatically thinks of the films on mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

26 January–2 February 1969 — After London ([Barry] Flanagan, fifty telephone calls to Long), continue on to Munich ([Walter] De Maria, Walther), Cologne, Dusseldorf ([Reinier] Ruthenbeck), Amsterdam ([Wim] Beeren, who is also doing an exhibition).

12 February 1969 — Ash pattern for Ruthenbeck is delivered.

14 February 1969 — The telephone company informs me that a second line will be installed in the Kunsthalle, so that Walter De Maria can speak directly with the visitors to the exhibition from New York.

16 February 1969 — We order 210 kilograms of lead, a one-cubic-meter gas bomb, a spirit burner, a pan, and a soup ladle for Serra's *Splash Piece*.

8–19 February 1969 — As Keith Sonnier says: "Live in your head."

20 February 1969 — MIDNIGHT: It will certainly be an "exciting" exhibition, whether it will be finished in time is another question, especially if I have to keep writing for the Stedelijk [Museum, Amsterdam].

20 February–15 March 1969 — The organization of the shipments from New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Turin, Genoa, Bologna, Rome, Paris, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, and London as well as the work on the catalog and poster demand a 24-hour workday. The interregnum in the secretarial office is bridged with temporary workers. The daily load encompasses thirty letters, two to three artist biographies; in short, the "Attitudes" fill four ring binders.

15 March 1969 — Michael Heizer arrives with his family.

16 March 1969 — 11 A.M.: To the countryside with the Heizers. Last day of rest before the storm. 7 P.M.: Keith Sonnier arrives.

17 March 1969 — Preparations for Heizer's work: telephone calls to the City President, the Municipal Gardener, and the demolition firm Abbruch-von-Tobel. [...]

THE EXHIBITION

Harald Szeemann

Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form [exh. cat. 1969]

It has always been the Kunsthalle's task to inform a broader audience about the most recent trends in visual art. Over the past few years it has done this almost programmatically. The stages of these thematic overviews have been: "Light and Movement–Kinetic Art," 1965, "White on White–Monochromy," 1966, 'Surrealism–Fantastic Art," 1966, "Science Fiction," 1967, "Polychrome Sculpture," 1967, "Forms of Color," 1967, "Environments," 1966. These were the most expensive but also the best attended of our exhibitions, and the ones which were always taken by museums abroad. On the basis of this series, Philip Morris Europe gave the director of the Kunsthalle the funds to organize a wider survey of contemporary artistic work. The most recent art in America as well as Europe was chosen. Where last year's Documenta 4 showed art up to the start of 1968, this exhibition, roughly speaking, will show recent work produced up to the present day.

Sixty-nine artists from America, Belgium, Germany, England, France, Holland, and Italy featured in the catalog; only about forty of these had works in the exhibition, because the works of the rest cannot be exhibited, and consequently only "information" can be supplied about them.

The exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form (Works–Concepts–Situations–Information)" seems oddly diverse and complicated in comparison with its predecessors, an accumulation of first-person narratives. We may rightly ask: is this a reaction against the geometry that has dominated over the past few years, a subjective art, a new version of Tachisme? Certainly, for most of the artists shown here, Duchamp's preferred working method, the intensity in Pollock's gestures, the unity of material, physical exertion, and time in the Happenings of the early 1960s can be evoked as branches of an artistic family tree. But in some cases works were not prompted by purely visual experiences. Hippiedom, the "rocker" lifestyle, and drug use would have affected the behavior of a younger generation of artists sooner or later. It is telling that some of the main members came from the West Coast of America, which is particularly exposed to Eastern influences. Much of this antisocial form, containing both the tendency towards contemplation and the action that relies upon the glorification of the physical and creative self, has flowed into this new art. Other pieces of the mosaic can be found in Europe: the lack of a center leads increasing numbers of artists to stay in their home towns and produce a "stream of consciousness" at odds with the ideas of the society around them. At the same time there is a tan-

gible desire to explode the "triangle within which art occurs": studio, gallery, museum.

The complex phenomenon has so far lacked a name and a following like that enjoyed by the "picture-oriented" Pop, Op, and Minimal Art. The suggested terms "anti-form," "Microemotive art," "possible art," "impossible art," "Conceptual Art," "Arte Povera," "Earth Art" only ever capture one aspect; the apparent opposition to form; the high level of personal and emotional commitment; declaring things to be art which have not hitherto been identified as such: the displacement of interest from the result to the process; the use of "poor" materials; the interactions of work and material; Mother Earth as a work material, as a workplace, the desert as a concept.

What is striking is the artists' complete freedom in the use of materials as well as the consideration of physical and chemical properties. While two years ago polyester and computers fascinated progressive artists as media and were the message, in this art the medium seems no longer to be important: faith in technology has made way for faith in the artistic process. The chief characteristic of contemporary art is no longer the arrangement of space; now the activity of the human being, the artist, is the main subject and the content. And this is how the title of the exhibition (a sentence rather than a slogan) is to be understood: never before has the artist's inner attitude so directly become the work. Of course it has always been this way—Mondrian and Pollock allowed the inner attitude to become form—but with respect to the finished result, the autonomous object. But the artists in this exhibition are not object-makers; instead they seek freedom from the object, and thus add to its layers of meaning the very significant dimension of also being a situation beyond the work itself. They want the artistic process to be visible within the final product, and in the "exhibition." It is characteristic of their work that the mass of the artist's own body and the power of human movements hold such importance for these artists, forming the new "alphabet of form and material" (Trini).

However, many artists, including the "earth artists," are no longer represented by works at all, only by information, while the "Conceptual Artists" are represented only by instructions for the work, which no longer needs to be materialized. Conceptual Art prefers to use already existing systems (the telephone network, the mail, the press, cartography) to create "works" that finally lead to new systems which do not comment on their origins.

Works, concepts, processes, situations, information (we have deliberately avoided the words "object" and "experiment") are the "forms" in which these artistic attitudes have taken shape. They are "forms" that have arisen not out of previously held pictorial opinions, but out of the experience of the artistic process. This also dictates the choice of the material and the form of the work as extensions of the gesture. The gesture can be private and intimate, or public and expansive. But the process is always significant, it is both "handwriting and style." Thus the meaning of this art lies in the fact that an entire generation of artists is endeavoring to turn the "nature of art and the artist," through a natural process, into "form."

WHEN ATTITUDES BECOME FORM

Tommaso Trini

Domus, September 1969

Harald Szeemann has achieved what will be looked on as the key exhibition of 1969 as far as international ventures are concerned, through the unaided strength of the Realistic approach. "When Attitudes become Form" is presented with all its contradictions. It is a census of the new artistic experiments that have succeeded Pop and Minimal art on both sides of the Atlantic and at the same time, official recognition of Anti-Form, Arte Povera, and Earthworks. Berne has thus stepped ahead of Paris, where the climate is one of ostracism toward innovations that upset, to a greater or lesser extent, the "guilty consciences" of those critics, and intellectuals in general, who are precariously poised between aesthetics and politics, and has offered a duty-free clearing-house to New York, where they have been temporizing, though it is by no means clear whether to avoid the explicit disagreement of the artists, or to be in a better position to make their own selections and impose conditions. But Berne is also a spiritual desert which has surrounded with vacancy, if this can be accepted as a definition of the mixture of indifference and hostility manifested by the "low horizon" of the Swiss capital—the true aesthetic experience presupposed by these researches: the animation and provocation of the feeling for life and nature, the extension of the ego and transformation of the libido both on the part of the artist-actors and the participating visitors. The deserved success of this Exhibition has signaled the failure of these experiments, or, rather, has demonstrated in vitro, their congenital tendency toward failure in any circumstances. The proof of this is in the fact that, from Krefeld to Stockholm, this same exhibition is to tour another eleven cities with its load of lead and earth, and with the odd bits of rubble ready to be restored. Like a rather botched film. When the attitudes of a museum become formal, we find a shop window instead of a research center, a warehouse instead of a school. The Berne Kunsthalle, packaged by Christo and rendered by Szeemann an outpost of art promotion that extends beyond the European, has now literally been handed over to the requirements of the artists. It has also revealed that despite such openings, there is no solution on the museographical plane for the reality-hunger of the art of today.

SWISS LETTER

Jean-Christophe Ammann

Art International, May 1969

Harald Szeemann has without doubt organized the most important exhibition of the year. While its impact cannot yet be fully gauged, it is likely to be tremendous. The groundwork done by individual progressive galleries in Europe such as Konrad Fischer (Düsseldorf), Ricke und Zwirner (Cologne), Heiner Friedrich (Munich), Sperone

(Turin), Wide White Space (Antwerp), and Sonnabend (Paris) to propagate "Land Art," "Arte Povera," and "Anti-Form" is superbly condensed here. The exhibition catalog is particularly important. A few artists, 19 in all, who are not exhibiting because their ideas or actions cannot be exhibited, are represented solely with information on their activity in the catalog, which thus becomes an integral part of the exhibition, significantly subtitled "Works–Concepts–Processes–Situations–Information." The exhibition was financed by Philip Morris Europe, whose president, John A. Murphy, writes in a short foreword: "Our constant search for a new and better way in which to perform and produce is akin to the questionings of the artists whose works are represented here." This acknowledgment is still new in Europe, but is already spreading in the United States, as witnessed by E.A.T. ("Experiments in Art and Technology"), which was founded in New York in 1966 and lists among its members companies such as Bell Telephone, Xerox, Western Electric, and IBM as well as some 400 engineers.

"When Attitudes Become Form" is not an easy exhibition, because everything in it essentially aims to document creative thought. "Nouveau Réalisme" still hinged on a principle: the direct translation of a conceptual or physical reality into an image or its configuration as an image, which highlighted the authoritative, objectual status of the object. Here, on the contrary, the focus lies on the visualization and mapping of thought processes, which implies a strong relativization of the objects.

If you want to begin to understand the exhibition, you need to be familiar with new methods of thinking—methods for which we find analogies in all areas of science today. A body of work, such as, for instance, Mondrian's, bears witness to a linear development: each work is developed logically from the previous. In his book *The Use of Lateral Thinking*, published in 1967, Edward de Bono calls this process vertical thinking. "Just as water flows down slopes," he writes, "settles in hollows and is confined to riverbeds, so vertical thinking flows along the most probable paths." The contrary of this traditional way of thinking is the modern lateral thinking. It can be compared to a realm in which the largest possible number of "dominant polarizing ideas," constitutive elements or bits of information are recorded, which, with regard to new conclusions, are combined in a great variety of ways. It should however be mentioned that this method was already used by Lévi-Strauss in his book Structural Anthropology (1958). "When Attitudes Become Form" must essentially be viewed from this perspective. Accordingly, the importance lies no longer in the single object, but in the relationships—because the nature of the relationships refers to the thought or intention of the artist. Therefore the use of sometimes randomly found materials should not preclude that the purpose is always the materialization of a thinking process occurring in the material and visualized through the confrontation with material. Hence, we are dealing with a kind of structuralism that, as far as the method is concerned, does not allow for different "readings." Within the method, however, a range of possibilities unfolds. Understandably, this survey, with forty artists exhibiting, cannot possibly consider everyone's intentions. Nor does it aim to. What matters is that it presents a survey of the latest visual thinking in its global effect. At the same time spheres of influence, such as protest and provocative modes of behavior, should not be overlooked.

Joseph Beuys exhibits two fat-corners, a fat-wedge, a pile of heated felt mats, and a tape recording of an insistent voice sighing "yes-yes-yes-yes-yes–no-no-no-no-no." The combination is excellent. The very specificity of the material, the sensual-haptic quality, which suggests something like equal auspices, creates a field of associations or a climate. This is important because in Beuys's work, actions are as significant as objects and their combination. A similar idea can be found in the work of Markus Raetz, who documents the distance between the Kunsthalle Bern and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam—where he is taking part in the exhibition "22 Young Swiss Artists"—by means of two endpoints (A and B) indicating the exact distance in miles. What does exact distance mean? Here, the most abstract and unrelatable one: a straight line running beneath the curvature of the earth. Neil Jenney's three-dimensional combinations of colorful neon lights, wood, and tin foil, look rather unassuming. "My works," he writes, "are theatrical. The effect of the physical presence of the items and events they create, provided they exist jointly, is theatrical. This leads beyond the mere visual image. Ideally, my sculpture exists unseen." Words that, ultimately, apply to a significant part of the exhibition. Michael Heizer has buried a huge piece of iron in the garden of the Kunsthalle; he cracked open the asphalt in front of the Kunsthalle with a wrecking ball. Only those in the know are aware of this action, which is invested with the same kind of expressive intensity. He furthermore cemented a furrow in the garden that is exactly in line with the tip of Bern Cathedral. (In the *Smoke Creek Desert*, he excavated several such furrows pointing in different directions.) By fixing "coordinates" and "results" of actions, Heizer visualizes his physical presence in a mental context. Here, specific materiality, in the sense of greatest possible generality, does not express itself as an object but as a trace that negates causality, as an effect.

07

EXHIBITION

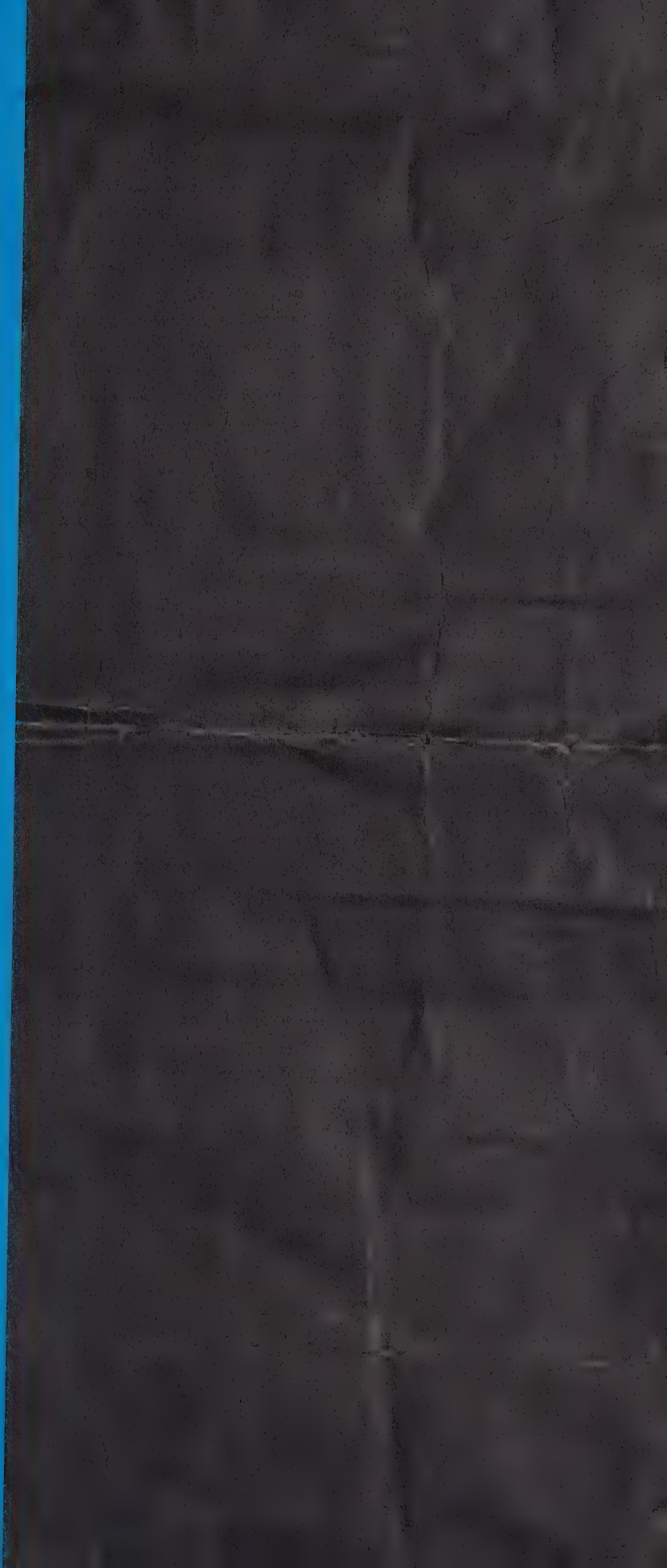
557,087

LOCATION

Seattle Art Museum Pavilion and surrounding area

DATE

5 September–5 October 1969



CURATOR
Lucy R. Lippard

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Vito Acconci, Marnie Allnadeff, Carl Andre, Keith Arnatt, Richard Artschwager, Michael Asher, Terry Atkinson, John Baldessari, Michael Baldwin, Robert Barry, Rick Barthelme, Iain Baxter, Gene Beery, Mel Bochner, Bill Bollinger, Jon Borofsky, Daniel Buren, Donald Burgy, Rosemarie Castoro, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, Jan Dibbets, Robert Doshan, Rafael Ferrer, Barry Flanagan, Anne Gerber, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Michael Heizer, Eva Hesse, Douglas Huebler, Robert Huot, Stephen Kaltenbach, On Kawara, Edward Kienholz, Robert Kinmont, Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, John Latham, Barry Le Va, Sol LeWitt, Lucy Lippard, Roelof Louw, Duane Lunden, Thomas Maytham, Bruce McLean, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, N.Y. Graphic Workshop, Dennis Oppenheim, John Perreault, Adrian Piper, Polly Rowe, Robert Rohm, Alan Ruppersberg, Ed Ruscha, Robert Ryman, Fred Sandback, Alan Saret, George Sawchuk, Richard Serra, Randy Sims, Robert Smithson, Keith Sonnier, Frank Viner, Jeff Wall, Lawrence Weiner, Ian Wilson, Jinny Wright

EXHIBITION CATALOG
557,087. Seattle: Contemporary Art Council, Seattle Art Museum, 1969. With texts by Lucy R. Lippard, artists' instructions, and other texts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 69
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

"557,087" was the first large-scale public exhibition to focus on conceptualist art practices. By naming her show after the population of its host city of Seattle recorded in the census of 1960, Lucy R. Lippard evoked a democratic notion of art as something to be shared by a broad public. When the exhibition traveled across the Canadian border to Vancouver, where it took a slightly different form, its title was the approximate population of that city: "955,000." Sponsored by the Contemporary Art Council of the Seattle Art Museum, it was centered in the 1962 World's Fair Pavilion and extended to a 50-mile radius around the city. But with only one painter and works ranging from Bill Bollinger's floating log to everything Robert Barry knew but was not thinking of on 15 June 1969 at 1:36 p.m., its esoteric nature was a challenge to its populist intentions. As critic Peter Plagens wrote, the exhibition produced "a bump in the phenomenology of art."

The catalog was a stack of ninety-five 4 x 6-inch index cards arranged randomly, including twenty for Lippard's essay and sixty-four cards contributed by the artists. Many of the artists' cards gave instructions for creating their pieces, or descriptions of things that could be realized by others. The genre of instruction work was an important conceptualist form, developed by Fluxus artists and flowering internationally in the late 1960s. Knowing that there would be little money for shipping and for artist travel, Lippard solicited proposals for works that she could make on site with the help of volunteers. Because the process yielded works that could be displayed inexpensively, art-by-instruction sat outside a commercial art system that highlighted the precious object. This resonated with Lippard's anti-elitist cultural politics, fitting well with her egalitarian aspirations for "557,087."

A central feature of instruction works is indeterminacy, allowing works to be realized in different ways. Critical details were sometimes unspecified, as when Carl Andre neglected to state that his piece should be made from finished lumber and Lippard used rough logs instead. And exigencies of circumstance often prompted loose interpretations or departure from instructions because Lippard and her co-workers constructed many works with little budget and in a short time. The open nature of art-by-instruction, and its collaborative character, thus shared creative responsibility beyond the artist and furthered the blurring of artistic roles.

This mixing of roles was a central feature of the time. Lippard began as an art critic living in a community of artists, and in 1966 she curated the important Post-Minimalist exhibition "Eccentric Abstraction." But she viewed her curatorial work as a variety of criticism, just as the artists of her generation engaged in critical writing as part of their artistic practice. When Plagens reviewed "557,087," he suggested that Lippard operated as an artist using other artists as her material, a charge that would be marshaled regularly against future curators. In retrospect she thought the remark appropriate to her work at this time when, say, a dealer could be as artistically innovative as an artist.

Such was the case with the activities of conceptual art impresario Seth Siegelaub, who assisted Lippard with both "557,087" and "955,000." Siegelaub shipped to the World's Fair Pavilion bookshop a large selection of artists' books as well as his own publications—catalogs that themselves functioned as exhibitions (Lippard's stack of index cards can also be seen in this way). After curating two more numbers shows—"2,972,453" in Buenos Aires in 1971 and "c.7,500" at seven sites in 1973–74—Lippard published a comprehensive archive of the period, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (1973). She considered this book to be her most successful curatorial project.

ROBERT MORRIS born 1931 lives New York City

Stand 10' from the wall. Holding the weapon at waist level, fire both barrels of a 12 gauge shotgun at the wall. Use heavy shot in the shells. Leave it - i.e., whatever falls on the floor, etc.

Photograph the above, make an 8" x 10" blowup in black and white. When the show travels to the next city, mount this photo on the wall at waist level and repeat the firing of the shotgun as described above. Photograph this (the wall, what remains of the photo) and enlarge to a 12" x 14" black and white.

If this piece were repeated in other locations, the photograph would be shot at, re-photographed and the size increased each time.

DEDICATED TO LAWRENCE WEINER WHO FIRED THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD.

Vito Acconci; 102 Christopher St., NYC; b. Jan. 24, 1940

untitled; 28"x34"; materials: calendar, postcards; date: exhibition dates

A postcard sent, for the duration of the exhibition, at the same time each day, from the same mailbox in New York City, to the exhibition site; the postcard, when received placed on a calendar, on the date-rectangle of the day it is received.

1. Performing; forming; transforming. 2. Day by day; from day to day; the other day. 3. End of an action; an action without an end. 4. "Place" (specific locality; an indeterminate region or expanse). 5. "Post" (to mail; to station in a given place). 6. "Point" (a particular place; a particular narrowly limited step, stage, or degree in the condition or development of something; a run — as a cross-country run — made straight from one place to another; to cause to be turned in a particular direction or toward a particular thing). 7. "Points of view" (view of the sender; view of the sender).

PROTOTYPE SNAPSHOT ACTUAL SIZE

ROBERT SMITHSON B. NJ 1938
400 SQUARE SNAPSHOTS OF SEATTLE HORIZONS -SHOULD BE EMPTY, PLAIN, VACANT, SURD, COMMON, ORDINARY BLANK DULL LEVEL BEACHES, UNOCCUPIED UNINHABITED, DESERTED FIELDS SCANTY LOTS HOUSELESS TYPICAL AVERAGE VOID ROADS SAND BARS REMOTE LAKES DISTANT TIMELESS SITES -USE KODAK INSTAMATIC 804

N.Y.C. 1969

8 rows of 50 ganged on wall

RE: SEATTLE SHOW, SEPTEMBER 1969/

TERRITORIAL RESERVE #4 (1968)

FOR THE DURATION OF AN EXHIBITION A BOUNDARIED, UNMARKED, PRE-ALLOCATED, SPACE OF 46,656 CUBIC INCHES IS TO REMAIN UNOCCUPIED.

MEL BOCHNER

B.D.: 23 AUG. '40 R.: NEW YORK CITY

R.Barthelme, B. October 10, 1946, New York, N.Y.
Instead of making any art I bought this television set.

The RUBENS - A850TW
Space Command® 600 Remote Control
Compact Giant-screen 23" Diag. Table Color TV. Vinyl clad metal cabinet in grained Kashmir Walnut color. Zenith Titan 80 Handcrafted Chassis with exclusive Zenith Solid-State Chromatic Brain Color Demodulator. New Zenith Color Commander Control. Advanced Super Gold Video Guard Tuning System. Sunshine® Color TV Picture Tube. Zenith AFC— Automatic Fine-tuning Control. VHF and UHF Spotlite Panel Zenith Automatic VHF Touch Tuning Bars. 5" x 3" Twin-Cone Speaker. Cabinet size: 21¼" H. 28⅜" W. 15⅝" D.*

William Bollinger
born: 1939
lives in New York

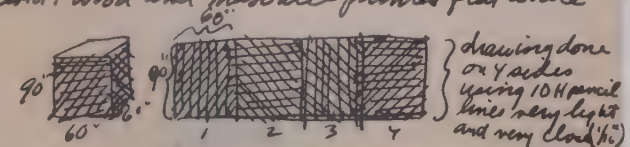
Large log (to be selected in Seattle), floating in a lake or bay.

(card by lrl not wb)

SEATTLE

a) SOL LEWITT
b) 9/9/28
c) NYC
d) Title: 3D unit with drawing on sides
Size: 60"X60"X90"
material: wood and masonite painted flat white

e)

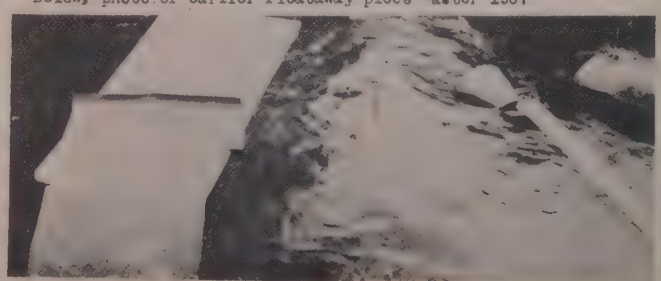


Plan for direction of lines.

Bruce McLean
Born Glasgow 1944
Lives in London

Seattle Lakescape piece. June 23. 1969.
(3 landscapes of Lake Washington by other artists, to be selected in Seattle)

Below, photo of earlier floataway piece Easter 1967



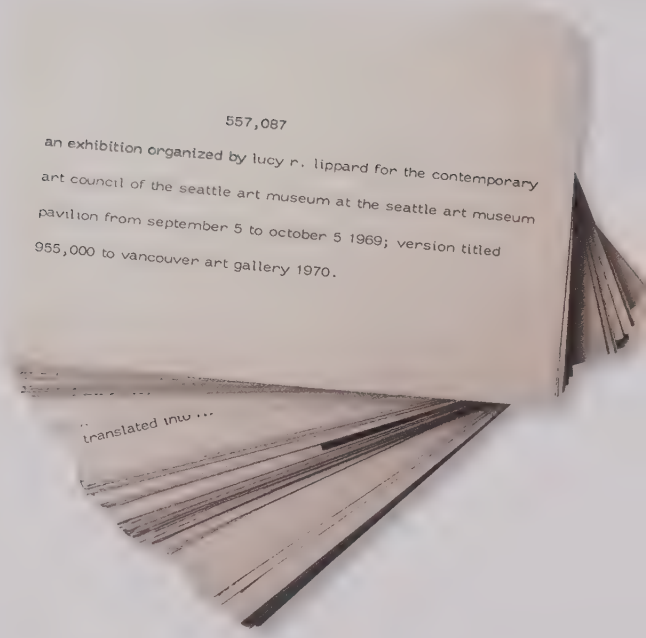
←← Robert Morris's catalog card for "557,087," with instructions for creating *Shotgun Piece*.
← Vito Acconci's catalog card, with instructions for creating an untitled mail-art piece.

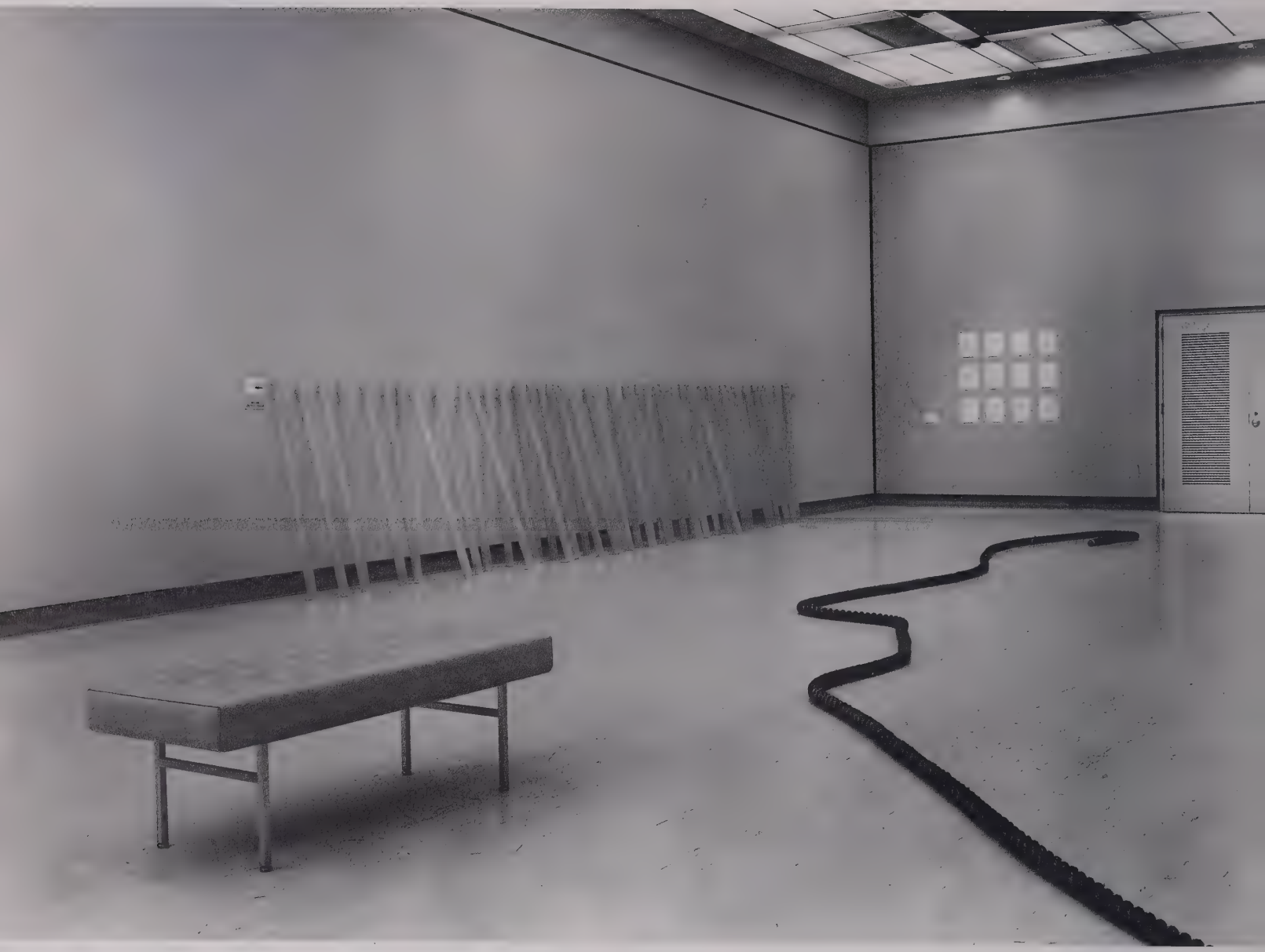
↙↙ Catalog card for Robert Smithson, with hand-written instructions for creating *400 Seattle Horizons*.
↙ Mel Bochner's handwritten catalog card, with instructions for creating *Territorial Reserve #4*.

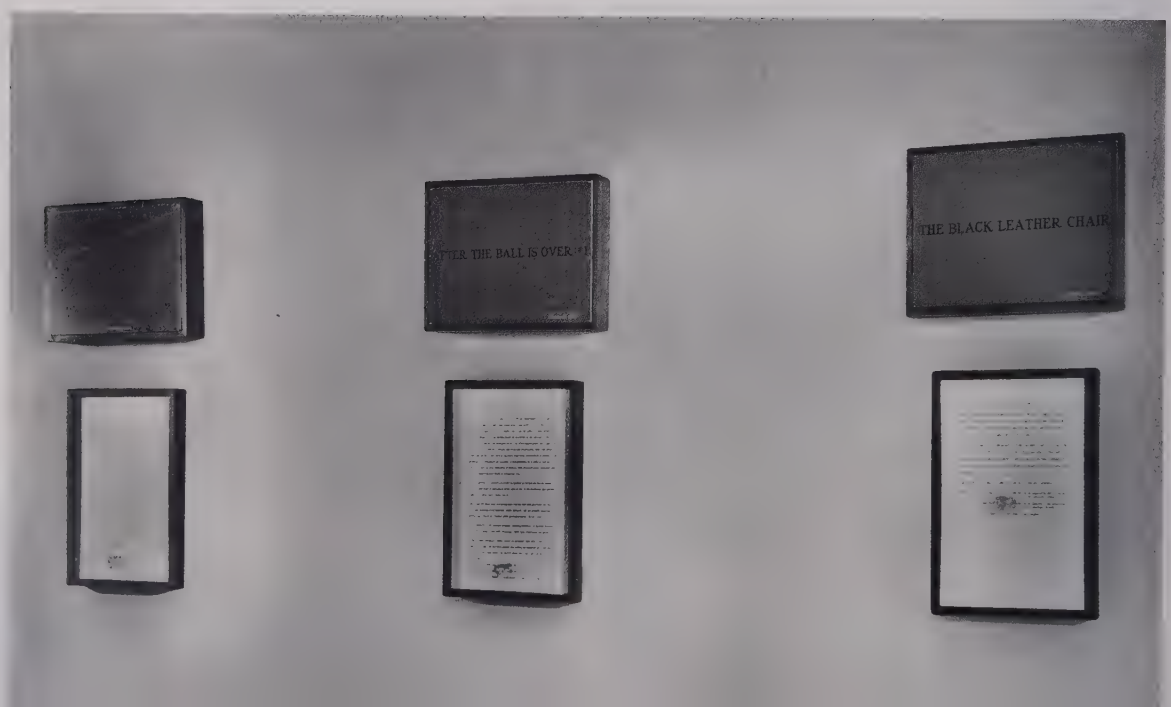
↙↙↙ Catalog cards Rick Barthelme, Bill Bollinger, Sol LeWitt, and Bruce McLean.

→ Exhibition catalog for "557,087", consisting of a stack of loose index cards.

↓ Main room at the Seattle Art Museum Pavilion, showing Barry Flanagan's *Two Space Rope Sculpture* (on the floor), Dennis Oppenheim's *Infected Zone* (left); Liliana Porter's work for the New York Graphic Workshop, *To Be Wrinkled and Thrown Away* (on the table); N.E. Thing Co.'s *VSI Formula #5* (on the freestanding wall in front of the entrance to the film screening room); and cards from the catalog (on the wall to the right).


557,087
an exhibition organized by lucy r. lippard for the contemporary
art council of the seattle art museum at the seattle art museum
pavilion from september 5 to october 5 1969; version titled
955,000 to vancouver art gallery 1970.

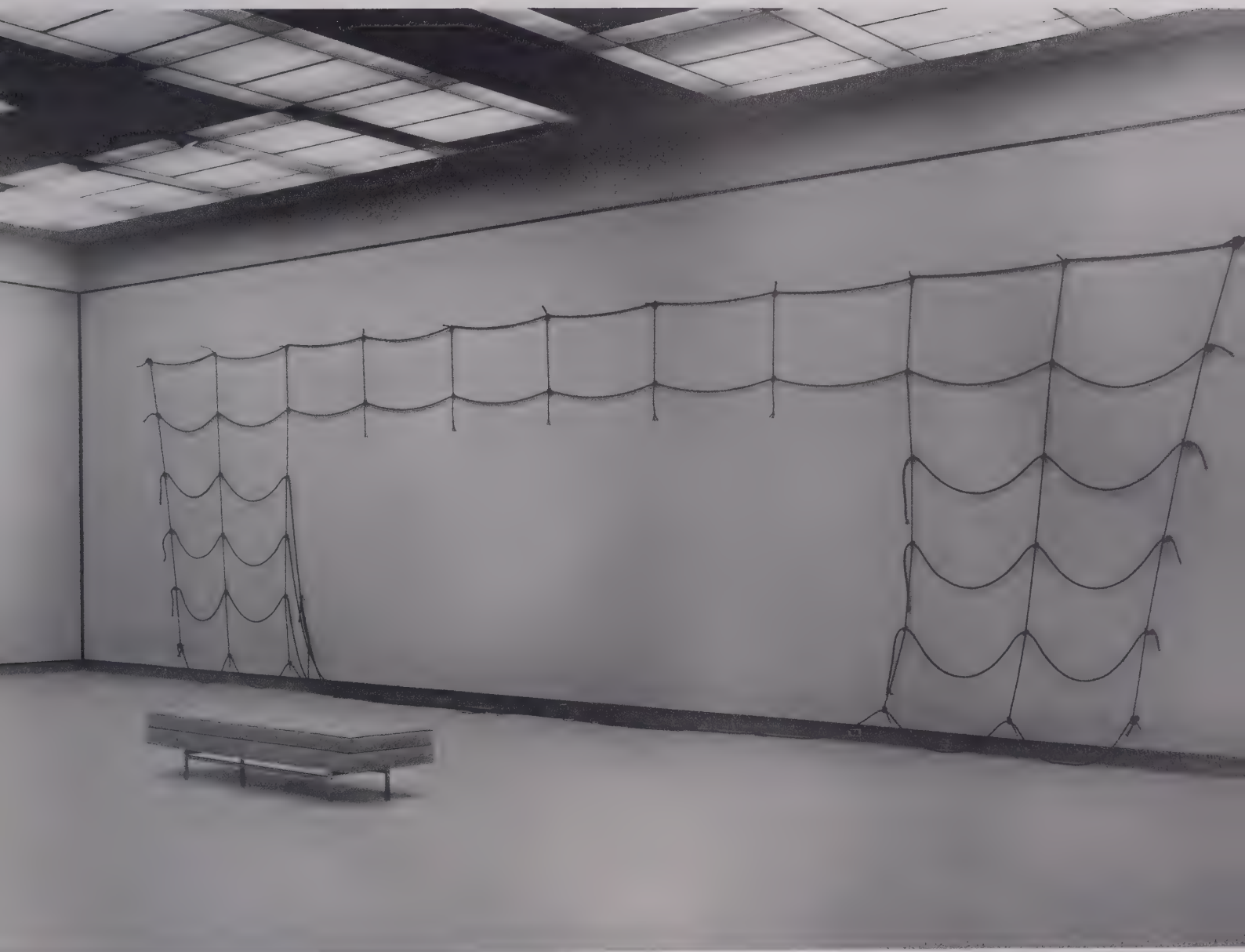


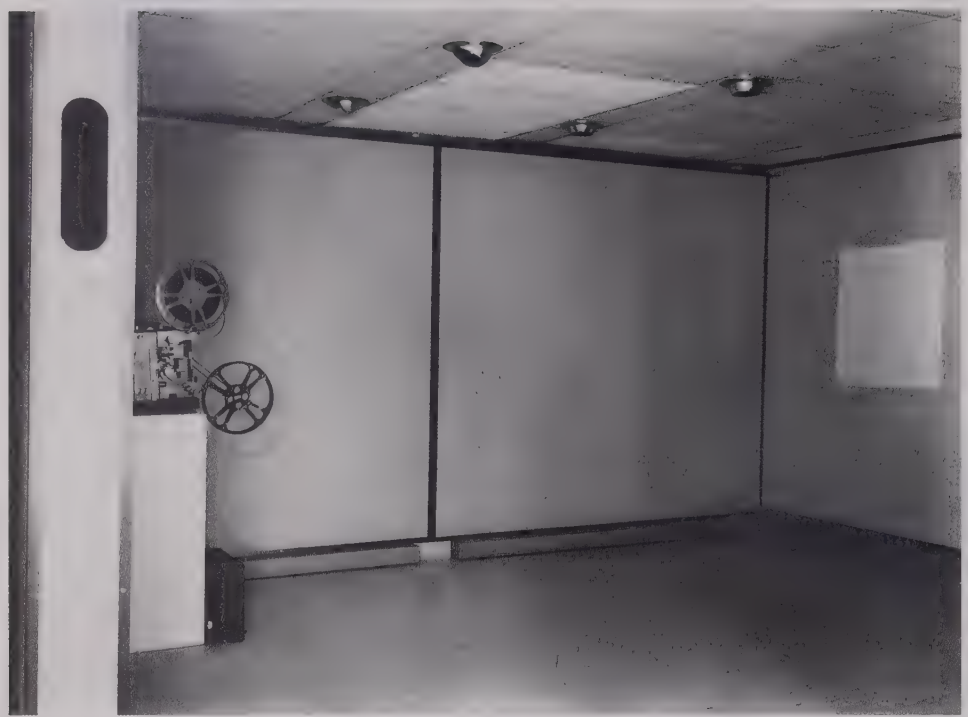

THE BLACK LEATHER CHAIR

← Leaning against the wall is Eva Hesse's 1968 *Accretion*, which consists of fifty tubes made from fiberglass and polyester resin. On the floor is Barry Flanagan's *Two Space Rope Sculpture*. On the far wall is mounted Jonathan Borofsky's *Quiz Questions*.

↙ Three brass plaques and framed texts by Ed Kienholz, from his *Concept Tableaux* series. The text for *The World* includes the statement, "I plan to sign the world as the most awesome 'found object' I have ever come across." The text for *After the Ball is Over #2* begins, "This tableau is to be built in the town of Fairfield, Washington. It will be an existing two or three bedroom frame house with a living room, kitchen, back porch, etc." The text for *The Black Chair* is more political and reads, "This is a tableau about the Negro in America." Buyers could purchase a proposal and Keinholz would later realize it as a drawing or full-sized tableau.

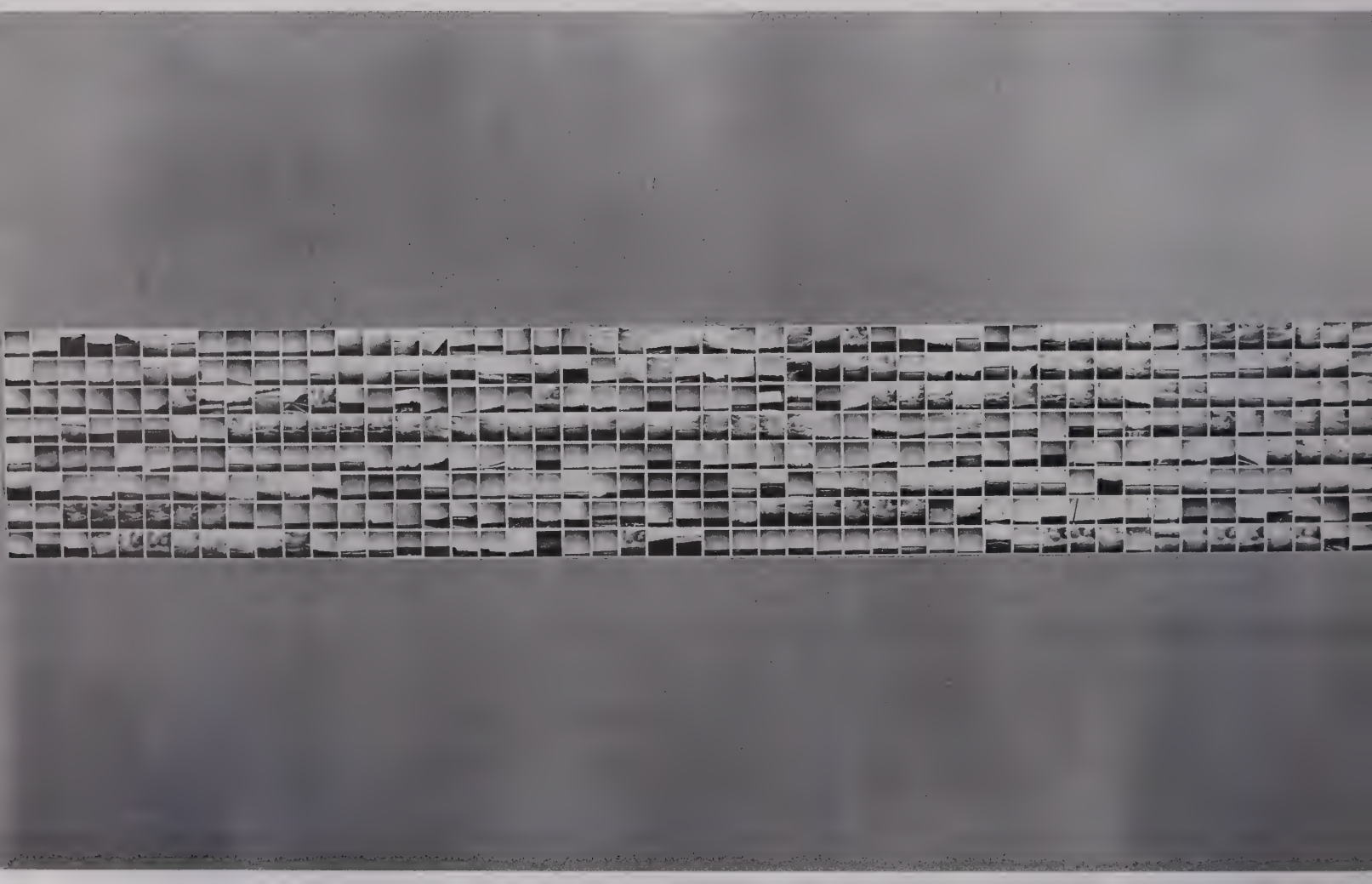
↓ Robert Rohm's *Untitled*, a grid made of manila rope, which was cut to instructions given by the artist. The work was also shown in the exhibition "Anti-Illusion: Procedures–Materials" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 19 May–6 July 1969.

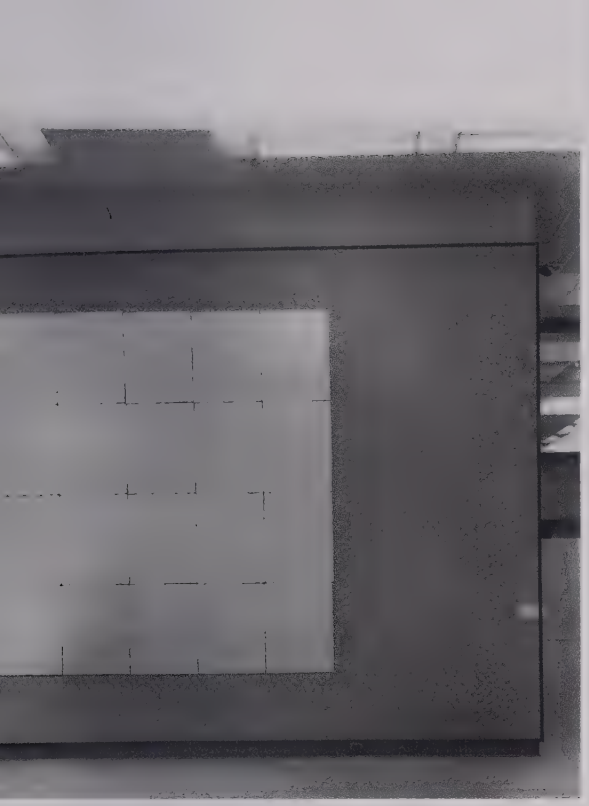


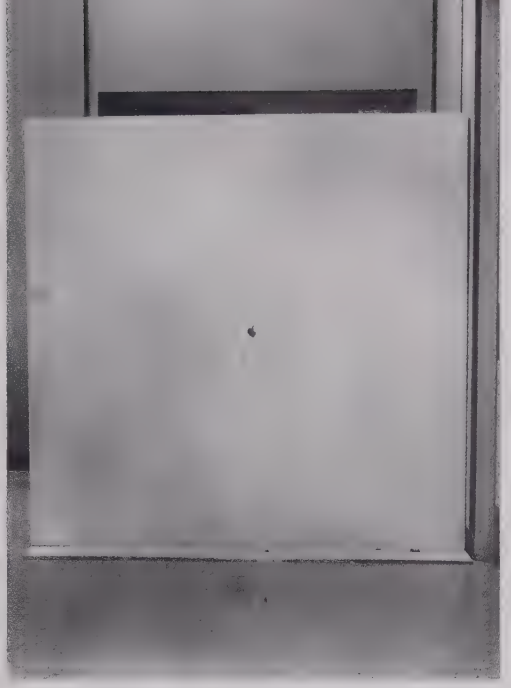


← The film projector room, with one of Richard Artschwager's *blps* (left; *blps* were also exhibited in the "When Attitudes Become Form" exhibition that same year; see pp. 95 and 96). The films shown were selected by Hollis Frampton, and included works by Ernie Gehr, Robert Huot, Ken Jacobs, George Landow, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Serra, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, and Joyce Wieland. Also screened was Gerry Schum's Land art programme, with works by Marinus Boezem, Jan Dibbets, Barry Flanagan, Michael Heizer, Richard Long, Walter De Maria, Dennis Oppenheim, and Robert Smithson.

↓ Robert Smithson's *400 Seattle Horizons* (destroyed). In the 1971 essay "Art Through the Camera's Eye," Smithson recalled "Once I had somebody take 400 snapshots of horizons in Seattle, the recording of such stigmatic vistas and unreachable limits resulted in a collection of banished bits of space. Taking such photos puts the human eye in exile and brings on a cosmic punishment."







←← Robert Rohm's *Classico*, which was made of twenty sheets of paper painted with white acrylic.

← Robert Morris' *Shotgun Piece* was the result of the instruction given on the artists catalog card (see p. 112): "Standing 10' from the wall, holding the weapon at waist level, fire both barrels of a 12 gauge shot gun at the wall [...] Photograph the above, make an 8" x 10" blowup in black and white [...]"

↓ N.E. Thing Co.'s mirror work, *VSI Formula #5*, the location and positioning of which was determined by an algebraic formula.

INTRODUCTION

Lucy R. Lippard

557,087 (exh. cat.)

Benevolent societies seem persistently engaged in bringing things together that are apart, and taking things apart that are together, thus fostering the perceptual mobility of art which is destructive of genuine concentration.—Edgar Wind

Art has never succeeded in changing or integrating with society. Recently artists (Cage, Kaprow, Rauschenberg, Oldenburg, Rainer) have moved to encompass the world (or be encompassed by it) on a more fundamental level. Experience and awareness are, after all, shared by everyone. Art intended as pure experience doesn't exist until someone experiences it, defying ownership, reproduction, sameness. Intangible art could break down the artificial imposition of "culture" and provide a broader audience for a tangible, object art. When automation frees millions of hours for leisure, art should gain rather than diminish in importance, for while art is not just play, it is the counterpoint to work. The time may come when art is everyone's daily occupation, though there is no reason to think this activity will be called art.

The experiences and motivations of a visual artist still differ from those of a poet, though as the media continue to mesh and the performing arts provide an increasingly relevant bridge between concrete art and concrete poetry, transitional figures continue to emerge (see the work of poets Acconci, Graham, and Perreault or artists Nauman, Wilson, and Barthelme in this exhibition).

At the moment the performance media offer extensions rather than alternatives to visual artists, since they are generally interested in the sensation of a kind of stopped or scrambled, unlinear time, not open to the performing arts, which exist in real time. Some of this comes in from literature like that of the very visually oriented Robbe-Grillet, but music and dance have also moved increasingly nearer to the plastic arts in their fascination with silence and near stasis, or very slow, extended, and repetitive movement. Visual art retains no "purity of medium," but an autonomy of viewpoint remains, and is best translated into film.

Capitalist progress [...] not only reduces the environment of freedom, the "open space" of the human existence, but also the "longing," the need for such an environment. — Herbert Marcuse

The engaged position is to run along the earth [...] My ideal piece of sculpture is a road. —Carl Andre

The major sculptural innovation of the 60's is the horizontal viewpoint opened to a traditionally vertical art form, a fact that initinally distinguishes sculpture from most architecture and, except for the linear, perspective depth implied, from painting. Vertical alignment is anthropomorphic, immediate, but static; the horizontal incorporates time distance, and is experienced and measured, kinaesthetically. This is a logical result of the jet age. Floor sculpture is seen from an aerial viewpoint. Man sees everything differently once he has flown.

Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side.

The course of development: Sculpture as form, Sculpture as structure, Sculpture as place. —Carl Andre

Sense of place varies: Baxter claims readymade natural or artificial places. Andre's places are localized by his "found" or indigent materials and by his use of sculptural energy. Lever (1966) ran through a doorway; the line of hay bales at Windham (1968) began in the woods and moved into an open field. Smithson localizes place, though in a manner that incorporates (shrinks) long distance between site and nonsite, landscape and its test-tube counterpart (rock samples). Huebler's place is generalized when he imposes a geometrical or serial plan on large areas, times, distances, demanding no physical proof of their characteristics, but marking duration or extension by document. Richard Long's ten-mile walking tour sculpture (1967) was both local and general; despite the distance, a very regional sense was retained by the choice of area in which to walk.

Start a rumor.—Steve Kaltenbach

Live in your head.—Keith Sonnier

Art is only memory anyway.—Michael Heizer

Ian Wilson, whose medium is "oral communication," preserves his apparently ephemeral art by "making it mnemonic [...] transcending particular times and particular places." How many people have seen Angkor Wat or the Isenheim Altarpiece more than once? Temporary art exists for less time but is no less accessible by photographic record. A "memorable art" is accessible to anyone who wants it enough to store it away. When computers provide artificial memories, our "private collections" will be unlimited, and the mind will be freer to pursue its own expanding awareness. Idea or conceptual art, like that of Darboven, Atkinson, Baldwin, Borofsky, Kawara or Kosuth, and physically extant but imperceptible art like Barry's, share basic conditions with all previous art. What is radically new is its context, the exhibition and dissemination possibilities (c.f. Seth Siegelaub's March and Summer shows, 1969, which took place all over the world—simultaneously or however the artists chose to govern their time).

Photography is a product of the non-relational aesthetic that pervades the 60's, and its ramifications for all the arts are innumerable. Still photography is notoriously unselective; though it can be made to falsify or over-dramatize its subject, once a viewpoint is chosen extraneous detail cannot be omitted, nor reality re-arranged. It can bring art to the level of everything else (Ruscha's books) or ricochet off reality (Baxter) or prove that the work of art exists specifically (Ruppersberg, Morris) or generally (Smithson, Huebler). Bruce Nauman extracts the punning potential of photography, as he dealt with puns in his seminal piled, random rubber sculpture (he, Hesse, and Viner were the first abstract artists to work significantly with soft

materials), then in his elaborately titled "representational" pieces, in photographs ("...our arrangement") and now in holograms. His films and tapes play deadpan, act on timely fiction (fact taken on faith): "The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths." "Do you believe that?" "I don't know. I think we should leave that open."

Chance brings us closer to Nature in her manner of operation.—John Cage

The more technologically sophisticated we become, the more we are able to plug into extant natural systems. Ecology, the relationship between an organism and its environment, interests some artists as a framework for control and change, others as a means of exploring the ratio of order and lack of order in nature. Haacke's Live Airborne Systems (1968) documents the movements of gulls taking bread from the sea. He has also worked with frost, condensation, evaporation, snow, mist, grass, representing the laboratory aspect of the more physically assertive earth sculpture. Hesse, Serra, and Saret, in varying degrees of dematerialization, explore the effects of natural forces and controlled randomness on materials, while Ruscha's inclusiveness ("All the Buildings on the Sunset Strip") applies a similar idea to the artificial environment; Artschwager's "blps" and Buren's posters accent urban ecology.

A word is worth 1,000th of a picture. —Iain Baxter

The visual artist uses words to convey information about sensorial or potentially perceptible phenomena; his current preoccupation with linguistics, semantics, and social structures as exposed by anthropology is not surprising. The fact that it is, indeed, structural patterns that are the basis of these fields brings them into visual range.

People deny that words have any thing to do with pictures. I don't accept that. They do. Art is a source of information [...] the work concerns itself with things whose interrelationship is beyond perceptual experience. Because the work is beyond perceptual experience, awareness of the work depends on a system of documentation [...] photographs, maps, drawings and descriptive language. —Douglas Huebler

All art originates in the human mind, in our reaction to the world rather than in the visible world in itself.—Ernst Gombrich

If the insistent physical presence of the primary structures is a time-stopping device that resists the modern world's flux by creating new, frontal, static monuments to the present, most of the work here deals with energy, animation, non-sequential and relatively irrational lines of time and material. It can, however, be speculatively concrete, even when it is invisible. Despite deceptively scientific or pragmatic presentations, the artists generally accept and are involved with the unknown on a different level than scientists. Artists do not analyze circumstances with progress in mind so much as expose them, making themselves and their audience aware of things previously disregarded, information already in the environment which can be harnessed into aesthetic experience. And what can't be?

The structures within which man functions should not be fortresses which exclude the external world, but interacting systems through which his life is made possible. Living and working space will then become organizational entities that will change as humans and the natural environment evolve. —The Pulsa Group

The conviction that geometry is the most neutral vehicle for either physical or conceptual art ideas has been more directly transferred from minimal art into the new forms than is immediately obvious. Morris's felt is cut in rectangular sections before it assumes its own shapes; Smithson, Huebler, Baxter, Arnatt, Louw, and others impose geometric overlays on space. If Morris is trying to expose the fallibility of order by refusing "to continue aestheticizing form by dealing with it as a prescribed end," a "systems aesthetic" continues the traditional artistic task of discovering underlying order in the world. Though the order found is far from traditionally constructed: "The special function of modern didactic art has been to show that art does not reside in material entities, but in relations between people and between people and the components of their environments" (Jack Burnham). Thus social comment (Oppenheim's extermination piece, Baldessari's ghetto boundaries) is possible, as well as a "regional art" made by foreigners through remote control (Ferrer's memorial to a Seattle engineer; McLean's Lake Washington piece).

The most important question is Why? all the answers belong to What? and every real interest pertains to How?—Frederick Castle

When the artist determines the materials and allows the materials to determine the final shape or shape possibilities, he is dealing with a set of factors producing difficulties new to contemporary art. The Surrealists, and Pollock, had in mind an often unarticulated image context within a broad Freudian or Jungian framework, even when this content was not immediately recognizable. The new "materialist," experience-oriented art has a recognizable content only in that it summons up a how-to-do-it picture of its execution in the viewer's mind. The lead was spattered against the wall with such and such a gesture; the rubber was poured and allowed to run off the edge of the mold this way; the sand was dumped that way and has spread according to succeeding events in its space. Ryman, the only painter involved, states unequivocally by his negation of the object quality of painting, that the path of what brush in what paint to produce what kind of surface is what matters.

Deliberately low-keyed art often resembles ruins, like neolithic rather than classical monuments, amalgams of past and future, remains of something "more," vestiges of some unknown venture. The ghost of content continues to hover over the most obdurately abstract art. The more open, or ambiguous, the experience offered, the more the viewer is forced to depend upon his own perceptions.

I cannot experience your experience. You cannot experience my experience. We are both invisible men. All men are invisible to one another. Experience is man's invisibility to man [...] Since your and their experience is invisible to me as mine is to you and them, I seek to make evident to the others, through their experience of my behavior, what I infer of your experience, through my experience of your behavior. This is the crux of social phenomenology.—R. D. Laing

Pop Art questioned the subject matter and materials of art. Earthworks, outdoor projects, documentary, and some "Antiform" sculpture question the experience of art; they suggest that like the tree falling in the forest, art can be anything perceived as art by anyone at that time. An artist can make his own or his environment's presence felt by dropping a point, a line, an accent, a word into the world, embracing all or parts of any area or period at any place or time. Concurrently, the area's or period's importance can be neutralized until the art becomes more abstract than ever, even when it is virtually inseparable from life. The implication is that what we now consider art will eventually be unrecognizable. On the other hand, the boundaries of seeing, like the perceptible aspects of nature or outer space, seem to extend as infinitely as man's experience and experiments can take them.

Art teaches people how to see.—Ad Reinhardt

Freedom is a negative, it's freedom from something.—Ad Reinhardt

The world is full of objects, more or less interesting, I do not wish to add any more. I prefer, simply, to state the existence of things in terms of time and–or place.—Douglas Huebler

Andre's use of his materials as "the cut in space" has been extended by Weiner's "removals" and Heizer's "negative objects" (trenches, holes). Freeing the world from an inundation of "precious objects" is only a by-product, but it has also freed younger artists from restrictions imposed by traditional definitions of the plastic arts. Kosuth, who began with Reinhardtian negative photostats of these definitions, wants "to remove the experience from the work of art [...] Non-artists often insist on something along with the art because they are not excited by the idea of art. They need that physical excitation along with the art to keep them interested. But the artist has that same obsessed interest in art that the physicist has in physics and the philosopher in philosophy."

557,087: APT TITLE, UNPREDICTABLE ART

Don Duncan
Seattle Times, 1969

Logic is logic, is all I can say. And 557,087 is the very logical title chosen for a contemporary art show opening here Friday and continuing through the month.

For one thing, 557,087 was the 1960 Seattle census. For another, it has a nicer ring than 2,918, which is the distance in miles between Seattle and New York, where most of the show originated.

The latter string of digits received serious consideration from the sponsoring Contemporary Art Council. But it finally agreed that it tended to reduce Seattle to "an outpost of New York."

Personally I think 34.1, our average rainfall, would have been very logical. But nobody asked me.

Anyways, 557,087 it is. And the show will take place in the Seattle Art Museum's Seattle Center Pavilion and way points. You will need a road map to find those way points.

Although the show may not be wild by New York and San Francisco standards, many here will throw up their hands and ask, "What is the art world coming to?"

It is coming to dirt trenches, shotgun blasts, logs floating in ponds, and giant billboards covered with masking tape, among other things.

Morrie Alhadeff, President of the Contemporary Art Council, is better known for his work on behalf of improving the breed of racehorses in this state. He may wish he had stuck with the more predictable nags when 557,087 invades the town with "the bluest skies."

Mrs. Ann Gerber, widow of the much-loved Sidney, is one of the show's hardest workers.

"How terrible if we should be ignored," Mrs. Gerber said. "I'd like to get a lot of hippies to attend. We can always count on the staid, middle-class, middle-aged people."

Mrs. Gerber handed me a stack of little white cards on which directions for assembling the show were printed. The cards represent the show's "catalog." They were assembled by Miss Lucy Lippard, a New York art-magazine critic who is gaining a considerable reputation for promoting art as a vehicle for social commentary and philosophical insights.

Sort of, a painting is a painting is a painting. But a dirt trench, well, it's cool and it's a good hiding place for tin cans and trap rodents.

Not all the artists whose work will be displayed will make it to Seattle, since they will receive no pay. But quite a number are coming on the promise of free lodgings and grub. One young lady has specified a high-protein diet, "and I expect to bicycle if there is no public transportation."

You can readily see that Seattle's big-league status hasn't made much impact on New Yorkers.

For that reason, Mrs. Gerber sent about two dozen road maps to artists, to give them an idea of Seattle's geography.

557,087

Peter Plagens
Artforum, November 1969

"557,087," the show that Lucy Lippard has organized for the Seattle Art Museum, will be recalled generically as the first sizable (i.e. public institution) exhibition of "concept art," but it is in fact an amalgam of non-chromatic work running a gamut from late, funky Minimal to a point at which art is replaced, literally, by literature. The show is a bellwether, consolidated enough to necessitate sifting high-grade bullshit Canal

Street art-thinking from genuinely dangerous, substantial material. "557,087" (which was, incidentally, the population of Seattle in 1960; the title changes when the exhibition reaches Vancouver) deals with the idea of ideas as art (roughly quoting Joseph Kosuth, one of the more ideational and difficult artists). Unfortunately, the context of exhibition bestows an unmerited exoticism on several ideas, which, as with most of the lesser work, rely on the quality of theater; biology or electronics or typing presented as art, unlike art presented as biology or electronics or typing, inherits the benefit of the doubt ("What does it mean?"), since art has no measurable practicality—a bad piece stands there just as long as a good one. Ideas have a tougher time considered as ideas than as art:

"In any field, some ideas are important and some are trivial. The importance of an idea is measured by 1.) the number of things to which the idea applies—its applicability; 2.) how often the idea is used in discussion and explanation—its relative frequency; 3.) to what extent other ideas flow from it or can be derived from it—its fruitfulness; 4.) to what extent the idea benefits human beings—its practical advantages; and similar factors."

The author (Edmund C. Berkeley, *A Guide to Mathematics for the Intelligent Non-Mathematician*) tenders the theory of evolution (natural selection) as a "profoundly important" biological idea, while the color classification of bears, although more widely known, is trivial. While "557,087" has its colored bears, there are quite a few good, hard, sticky ideas (concepts?) around. (The catalog is a set of label cards, one per artist, in most instances completed by the artist. The cards are randomly ordered and, in constant reshuffling, constitute a technique for apperceiving the show.)

Bullshit, most of which is found in the catalog cards, seems a product of ideological fervor and occurs, mainly, in two forms: statements so extended and ersatz-profound as to cancel significance, and specious assertions. Some of the former: "the boundaries of seeing, like the perceptible aspects of nature or outer space, seem to extend as infinitely as man's experience and experiments can take them"; "I'm sure there are a lot of things we don't yet know about which exist in the space around us, and, though we don't see or feel them, we somehow know they are out there"; "Metaphors for the degree to which an individual exists in the world, the degree to which he asserts himself, asserts his environment." Some of the latter:

"Non artists often insist on something along with the art because they are not excited by the ideas of art. They need that physical excitation along with the art to keep them interested. But, the artist has that same obsessed interest in art that the physicist has in physics, and the philosopher in philosophy." (One of the con jobs of newer art-thinking is the straw-man scientist who does everything right that the old, garret-style artist did wrong); "Because the work is beyond perceptual experience [...]" (Darby Bannard has pointed out the forced hyper-positive use of "beyond" where "short of" might well apply); "Artschwager's *blps* and Buren's posters accent urban ecology."

But there are first-rate idea pieces: 1.) Robert Morris's wall, a process piece. The wall suffers a shotgun blast, the blasted wall is photographed, and the photograph is mounted over the buckshot crater. The process is repeated at each succeeding location of the exhibition, each consecutive photograph a couple of inches larger than the last; 2.) Joseph Kosuth's series of cards, part of a larger work entitled *Art as Idea as Idea;* 3.) Robert Huot's room painted Pratt & Lambert #5017 alkyd flat blue; 4.) William Bollinger's log floating in Seattle Bay; and 5.) Dennis Oppenheim's *Infected Zone*, another process piece: an area of land undergoes bombardments of gasoline, rat poison, grass poison, etc. I did not see Huot's room (to be done when the show reaches Vancouver) or Bollinger's log, or, except through "photo-documentation"—a standard mannerism of Concept art—Oppenheim's *Zone;* nevertheless, the ideas are appealing, and with this I find myself harmoniously level with the exhibition. In these invisible pieces, we are head-on against quality and intent: in place of physical fact, there is a description and perhaps a few clues as to intent. No one, it seems, is quite sure of the staying power of non-corporeality; "557,087" requires a hell of a lot of reading (revolution floats on a sea of words). But, to "see" these pieces as figures of radicalism against a ground of "art" is, once more, to make a necessity of "art"; thus, non-present pieces are in the mind, where they are free to be dealt with as ideas. Morris's wall is significant as an idea (ad infinitum as a physical process) and, concretely, as a static–moving time piece (the form, complete in Seattle, projects itself ahead and behind through the photograph). In Kosuth's piece, the slender physicality of the cards is reluctant, but the philosophy is honest; Kosuth risks the embarrassment of trying to find answers in his typed outline, rather than merely, hiply, "posing question." The quality of Kosuth's thinklng is evident when compared to Robert Barry's gratuity: "All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking—1:36 p.m; 15 June 1969 New York." Huot's room and Bollinger's log have in common a physical, but conceptually extended connection to "art" which gives rise to multiple possibilities—comments on painting and sculpture, explorations of materials, participation-environmental-time pieces, etc.—while retaining a grittiness in the work (or idea of the work) itself. Oppenheim's *Infected Zone* is, among the others, an old master: a slick, mature, finished product (color photographs, technical specifications, "official" signature).

The relationship of art to objecthood, perhaps the true problem of "557,087," is solved in a literary way, by literature. The concepts in Concept art are either so large, general, profound, abstract, permanent, or so small, personal, complex, trivial, particular, ephemeral as to mock any rationale for an art object. Into the vacuum abandoned by the art object comes "concept," made manifest by literature (specifications, photo-documentation, formulae, and, infrequently, ordinary narrative prose). At its best the art exceeds literature-as-medium, and in pieces by Morris, Sonnier, Ryman, Eva Hesse (Accretion, an object consisting of fifty fiberglass tubes leaning in a row

against the wall), Ed Ruscha (the book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* mounted as a single horizontal strip so that the south side of Sunset Boulevard is upside down), Robert Smithson's 400 drugstore-size snapshots of "Seattle horizons," Mel Bochner's *Territorial Reserve #4* (which at least anticipated the need for boundaries), and Fred Sandback's untitled rectangle of elastic cord, the presence is felt rather than read about. When the particular properties of literature dominate, the results become curiouser and curiouser. One of Edward Kienholz's *Tableaus* entitled *After the Ball* contains the following first-novel prose: "In the kitchen, sitting at a table, under an unshaded light bulb is the father, tired, rigid, menacing. He has been teased into letting his daughter go to the dance (this is her first real date). He doesn't know why, but right now he hates the young man." Dan Graham's work, a melange of writing, tape, and assorted evidence, contains such heavy Sociology 1A nuggets as astrology considered as a social science, magazines as socio-economic statements, and the possibility of no-point-of-view writing.

And there are indifferent idea pieces (not bad, really, but ailing from predictability): 1.) Ian Wilson's medium of "oral communications" (art-talk, talk-as-art); 2.) Robert Rohm's 40 by 20-foot [12 x 6-meter] rope grid in which certain cuts have been made, a whole section falling limply to the base (the effect is palpably visual, the "documentation" is precious window dressing); 3.) Bob Kinmont's *Eight Natural Handstands* (photos) which occupies that gap between Deborah Hay and Andy Warhol and debilitated by (in comparison to) Bruce Nauman's films; and 4.) John Baldessari's and George Nicolaidis's silver ghetto stickers reading "– Boundary – A section of a city, especially a thickly populated area inhabited by minority groups often as a result of social or economic restrictions," which were placed on the perimeter of San Diego's black ghetto (fine conscience-tweaking entertainment for culture vultures and, they'll never know).

Some examples of pretty bad idea pieces were 1.) Bruce McLean's three landscapes of Lake Washington by other artists, selected (one bad traditional, two bad "early" moderns) in Seattle; 2.) Richard Artschwager's *blp*, a shape similar to his *100 Locations* piece in the Whitney Annual, but here adjusted for "concept" purposes: "When you see a 'blp' you recognize it as an image of the true blp which is in your mind"; 3.) Rick Barthelme's television set (not present) which "instead of making any art, I bought"; 4.) On Kawara's notebooks, I Met and I Went in (medium) "people and cities"; and 5.) Adrian Piper's display of two notebooks and a map documenting travel from Point A (New York) to Point B (Seattle), including, helpfully, textbook definitions of point and line.

There is a totality of style to the show, a style so pervasive as to invite the conclusion that Lucy Lippard is in fact the artist and that her medium is other artists, a foreseeable extension of the current practice of a museum's hiring a critic to "do" a show and the critic then asking artists to "do" pieces for the show. The most salient aspect of "557,087"s statement is precisely the lengths to which it refuses to go. For instance, it is explained that parts of the show are not confined by the limits of the museum, Seattle, or, indeed the dates of the exhibition, a hedging that asks why the show was not merely declared without benefit of a World's Fair Pavilion embellished in the traditional manner, with the untraditional objects and ideas of "557,087." Also, it is noticeable that, in a general kind of art in which there are few, if any, material prerequisites, we have a glut of glossy photographs, notebooks, and typewritten copy and, by contrast, very few technical or, more broadly, non-literary statements. Finally, most of the intensely literary work, like Donald Burgy's loose-leaf, a medical and psychological history, pertains to the hypnotic demarcation between the specific (personal) and the abstract (conceptual). Burgy's concern for the nature of his own navel, his own head, becomes, successively, relentlessly ordinary, banal, impersonal, abstract, and conceptual.

In its parts, "557,087" emerges from manifold sources, of varying degrees of relevance ("relevance" depends on belief in "issues" in current art, as opposed to endless refinement; "557,087" is about issues). In Allen Ruppersberg's *Hay at the Ambassador*, a table covered with, among other things, greenish hay, the allusions to Duchamp's Fountain and Man Ray's *Le Cadeau* are obvious, as is the art-historical specter (Abstract Expressionism to Pop to Minimal to Earthworks to Concept art) hovering over most of the exhibition. The single most pertinent source is, I think, an almost Puritan, moralistic concern with the threatening, nagging, perverse presence of "art" and, a subsource, anti-technology. One notebook admits the questions, "Are works of art PHYSICAL objects? Are works of art physical OBJECTS?" Poignant, not strident, the idea pieces in "557,087" ricochet around, figures begging for grounds. The choice of non-technology, a modus operandi, validates in the exhibition (or that part of it concerned with asking) since new media (opposed to non-media) avoids the business of redefining art; new media asks only mechanical questions; non-media asks almost all the other questions. Miss Lippard's exhibition is, if not what it might be (concept), at least a compilation of emphatically non-decorative, a-technical art, and art-thinking. And, if the quality and force are uneven, if the concept of concept art is unlikely to retain much cohesion before most of the artists are further dispersed, the show effects a bump in the phenomenology of art.

08

EXHIBITION

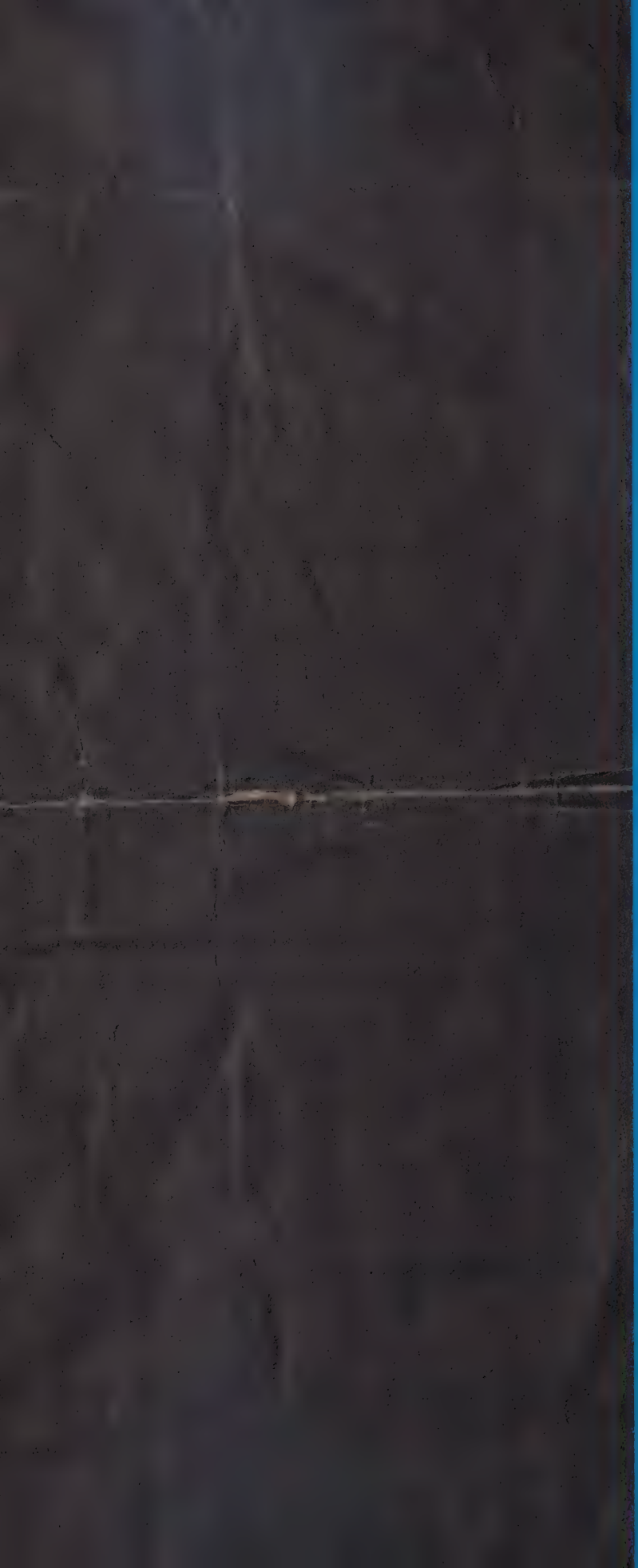
Information

LOCATION

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

DATE

2 July–
20 September
1970



CURATOR
Kynsaston McShine

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Vito Acconci, Carl Andre, Siah Armajani, Keith Arnatt, Art & Language Press, Art & Project, Richard Artschwager, David Askevold, Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, John Baldessari, Michael Baldwin, Barrio, Robert Barry, Frederick Barthelme, Bernd & Hilla Becher, Joseph Beuys, Mel Bochner, Bill Bollinger, George Brecht, Stig Broegger, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Donald Burgy, Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden, James Lee Byars, Jorge Luis Carballa, Christopher Cook, Roger Cutforth, Carlos D'Alessio, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, Jan Dibbets, Gerald Ferguson, Rafael Ferrer, Barry Flanagan, Group Frontera, Hamish Fulton, Gilbert & George, Giorno Poetry Systems, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Ira Joel Haber, Randy Hardy, Michael Heizer, Hans Hollein, Douglas Huebler, Robert Huot, Peter Hutchinson, Richards Jarden, Stephen Kaltenbach, On Kawara, Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, John Latham, Barry Le Va, Sol LeWitt, Lucy Lippard, Richard Long, Bruce McLean, Cildo Campos Meirelles, Marta Minujin, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, N. E. Thing Co., New York Graphic Workshop, Newspaper (edited by Stephen Lawrence), Group Oho, Helio Oiticica, Yoko Ono, Dennis Oppenheim, Panamarenko, Giulio Paolini, Paul Pechter, Giuseppe Penone, Adrian Piper, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Emilio Prini, Alejandro Puente, Markus Raetz, Yvonne Rainer, Klaus Rinke, Edward Ruscha, J. M. Sanejouand, Richard Sladden, Robert Smithson, Keith Sonnier, Ettore Sottsass Jr., Erik Thygesen, John Van Saun, Guilherme Magalhaes Vaz, Bernar Venet, Jeff Wall, Lawrence Weiner, Ian Wilson

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Information. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970. With essay by Kynaston McShine and artists' texts. Some artists' contributions created specifically for the catalog.

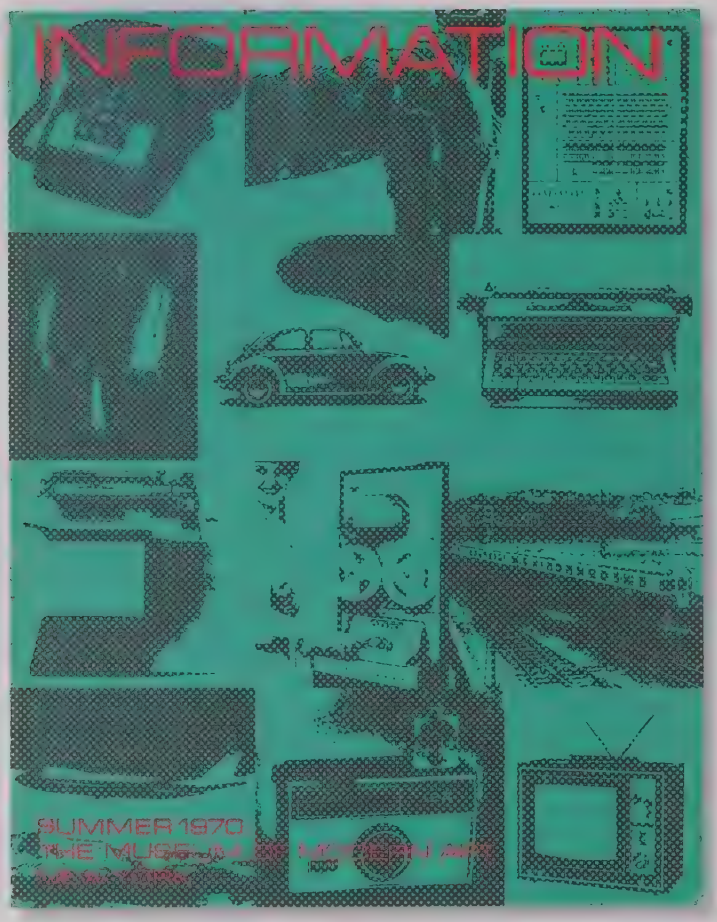
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: more than 150
Number of art works: ca.300
Total attendance: unknown

"Information" was an exhibition of radical content presented in the establishment Museum of Modern Art. The catalog featured photographs of Che Guevara and political demonstrations, and corporate sponsors Olivetti, ITT, and Xerox contributed the show's technology. Its contradictions were announced at the exhibition entrance, where Hans Haacke's *MoMA Poll* asked visitors to decide whether a former museum president's not stating his opposition to the Vietnam War would be reason to vote against him for governor of New York. Almost 70 per cent of those who replied voted "yes."

While the *MoMA Poll* might have been the most confrontational work, the most controversial was John Giorno's Dial-A-Poem, which offered the public twelve different readings a day accessible by telephone from both inside and outside the museum. In addition to poems read by literary figures, there were statements by such radicals as Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver and Bernardine Dohrn of the Weathermen. In the press it was called "Dial-A-Revolutionary." And with his show opening two months after the fatal shooting of student demonstrators at Kent State University, curator Kynaston McShine connected the full range of work in "Information" with radical politics. In the face of oppression around the globe, he stated, many artists had come to question the significance of "apply[ing] dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas." It is no wonder that the new museum director, John Hightower, walking the line between his sympathy for protesters and the need to mollify his conservative trustees, warned the museum's governing board that much in the show was "tough, upsetting, and angry."

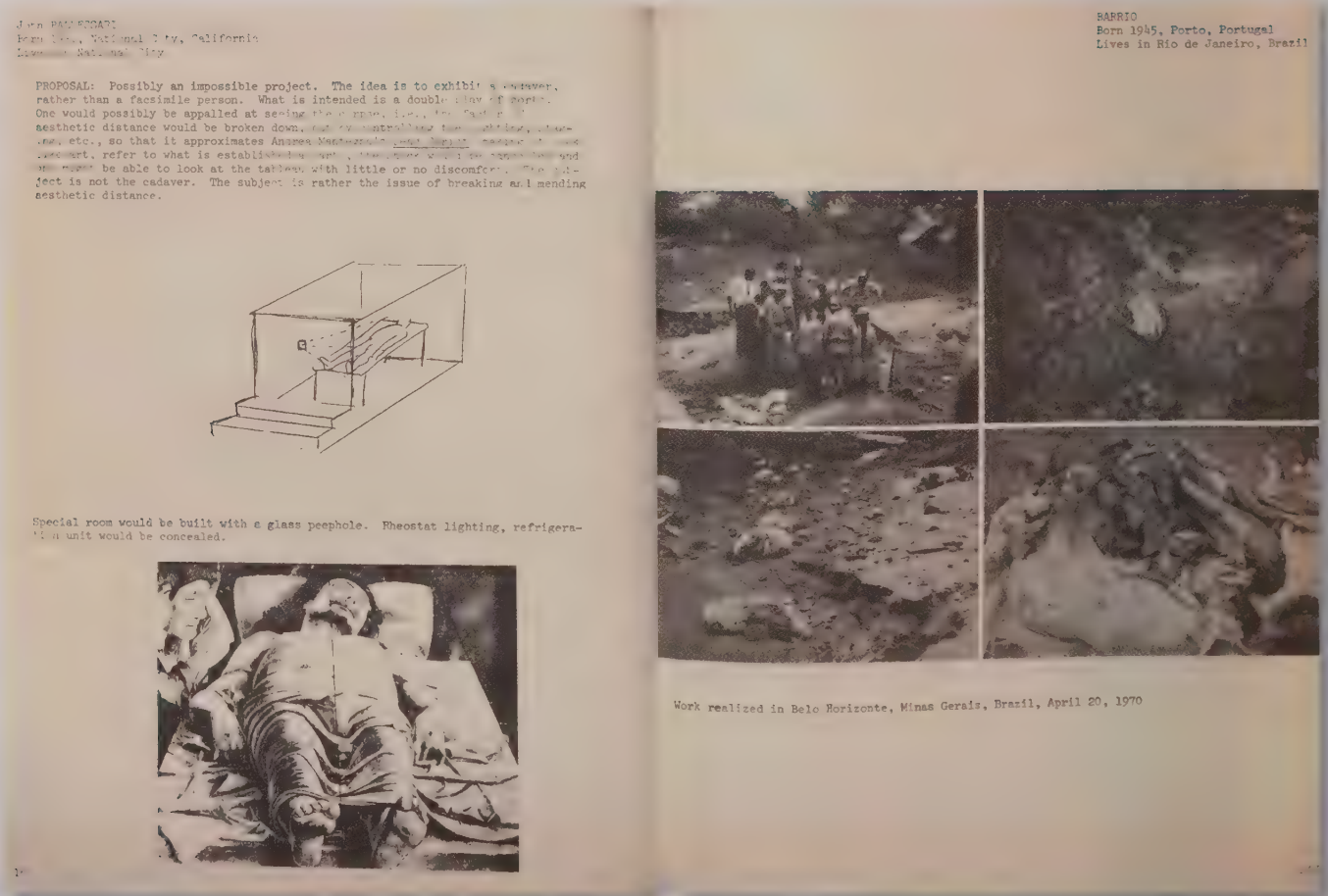
But in calling the exhibition "Information," McShine referred primarily to something other than political words and images and the politics of artistic medium. For the show essentially was an international survey of conceptual art in all of its variety. Less austere than the simultaneous "Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects" at the New York Cultural Center, "Information" included participatory installations by Brazilian Helio Oiticica and the Argentine Group Frontera, dramatic constructions staging abstract ideas, and a giant "information machine" designed by Ettore Sottsass simultaneously showing multiple films to multiple viewers. The international roster of artists was a critical aspect of the exhibition, not only demonstrating the global use of conceptual strategies but also the existence of a McLuhanesque "global village" created by electronic systems of communication. McShine took this technology to have decentered the art world, a point suggested by the messages sent by Iain Baxter from Vancouver to a telex machine in the gallery. And of course there was much else to read, with Sacco beanbag chairs on which visitors could take a break from their reading.

The catalog functioned as a kind of exhibition site in itself. Apart from a short text by McShine and an extensive film list and bibliography of recommended readings, it consisted of pages solicited from artists—many referring to works other than those presented in the museum—and a long visual essay. Taking up about a third of the catalog, the pictures ranged from the surface of Mars with the corresponding digital information from the Mariner 4 spacecraft to Black Panther Party members juxtaposed with Duchamp's *Three Standard Stoppages*, along with newspaper headlines, utopian architectural drawings, and political imagery. Among the latter was a poster of dead bodies at the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam, with the question "And babies?" at the top and on the bottom the answer: "And babies." Planned jointly by the Art Workers Coalition and the museum's design department, it ultimately was nixed by museum trustees. But its inclusion in the catalog and in the exhibition suggests the growing capacity of museums to accommodate the radical gesture.



← Cover of the *Information* exhibition catalog.

↓ A spread from the *Information* catalog, with (on the left-hand page) John Baldessari's unrealized proposal for the show, which was to exhibit a real corpse. On the right-hand page are documentary images of actions by Artur Barrio, in which he placed his "Bloody Bundles" (*Trouxas Ensanguentadas*)—bundles of rags resembling human corpses—in a park in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The actions were a protest against the paramilitary police (death squads) operating in Brazil at that time.


John BALDESSARI
Born [illegible], National City, California
[illegible] National City

PROPOSAL: Possibly an impossible project. The idea is to exhibit a cadaver, rather than a facsimile person. What is intended is a double [illegible] of sorts. One would possibly be appalled at seeing the corpse, i.e., the [illegible] aesthetic distance would be broken down, [illegible] etc., so that it approximates Andrea Mantegna's [illegible] Lamentation. [illegible] refer to what is established [illegible] be able to look at the tableau with little or no discomfort. The subject is not the cadaver. The subject is rather the issue of breaking and mending aesthetic distance.

Special room would be built with a glass peephole. Rheostat lighting, refrigeration unit would be concealed.

BARRIO
Born 1945, Porto, Portugal
Lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Work realized in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, April 20, 1970

← Letter from Gilbert & George to Kynaston McShine, expressing regret for their inability to create a new work for the exhibition.

↓ Poster advertising John Giorno's *Dial-A-Poem*, a system whereby visitors to the gallery could access and listen to poems by a range of contemporary poets and political radicals.

GEORGE GILBERT

art for all

12 FOURNIER STREET, LONDON, E.1, ENGLAND Tel. 01-247 0161

June 9th 1970

Dear Kynaston Mc Shine ,

We had intended to make a Sculpture for your exhibition . This has not been possible because we have been very busy with shows on the continent . We are sorry . Under the circumstances please feel to exhibit the 2 colour photograph portraits together with the other original catalogue material we sent to you .

Very Best Wishes to YOU from

gilbert and George

"Art for All" London 1970 .

GIORNO POETRY SYSTEMS

DIAL-A-POEM
at The Museum Of Modern Art
(212) 956-7032

DIAL-A-POEM is a new system for communicating poetry.

There are 12 telephone lines each connected to an automatic-answering set which holds a 2-minute pre-recorded message. A person calling gets randomly one of the 12 poems. We have 12 or more poems from each of the 50 poets.

Because of the political conditions within the country and the Southeast Asian War, more than half the telephone lines are given to poets in The Movement: Eldridge Cleaver, Kathleen Cleaver, Bobby Seale, John Sinclair, Bernadine Dorn, Abbie Hoffman etc.

During the 5 months DIAL-A-POEM was on at The Architectural League Of New York, 1,112,337 calls were received on 10 lines.

222 BOWERY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10012
(212) 925-8372

↑ Installation view, showing (at back left) a quote by Andy Warhol: "In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes." In the center is Joseph Kosuth's *One of Three Chairs*, and to the right are eight photo-panels showing Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* at Great Salt Lake, Utah.

↗ On the left is Roger Cutforth's *Noon-Time Piece*, comprising thirty photographs of the sky at noon in April 1969. Joseph Kosuth's *One of Three Chairs* and three works from the *Art as Idea as Idea* series are on the freestanding wall at center; on the floor in front of Kosuth's work are Sacco beanbags. To the right, on the floor, is Stig Brøgger's green-colored platform, with a series of accompanying photographs of the work installed in public locations around New York and New Jersey, showing the reactions of passersby to the platform.

→ On the left, Walter De Maria's page from an article on the artist published in *Time* magazine, 2 May 1969, enlarged at the scale of 1-foot-to-1-inch (30 centimeters-to-2.5 centimeters). In the center is Siah Armajani's *Number Between 0 and 1*, a column of computer printouts of all the digits between zero and one. To the right is Armajani's *North Dakota Project*, a series of photographs and photostats documenting a proposal for a tower to be built on the eastern border of North Dakota, which would be tall enough to cast a shadow across the entire length of the state to its western border.

ART

SCULPTURE

High Priest of Danger

Since he first came East in 1960, a Californian named Walter de Maria has established himself as a kind of high priest of Manhattan's artistic underground. His ideas are outrageous, as he apparently intends them to be. De Maria aims not to please but to force the viewer into studying his work and puzzling out its meanings. If the effort is infuriating more often than not, that makes no difference in De Maria's view.

His basic approach is a tantalizing simplicity—a column of polished steel, a square sheet of blank paper with a single word such as "Sky" lettered on it, a wooden booth with a small plaque in it labeled "Suicide." Each is intended to convey or stimulate some arcane, fey or fiendish compulsion or conceit.

This approach has made him, among other things, a founding father of that singularly obdurate style of sculpture known as Minimal art. In 1961, when De Maria was still a neophyte artist, he built two plain wood boxes. They differed from later Minimal artists' boxes primarily by being open and filled with wood blocks. De Maria intended the spectator to wonder obscurely whether or not he ought to shift the blocks from one box to the other.

Diabolical Ping. This fondness for movable sculpture qualified De Maria as a progenitor of the busy school of "Optional art," whose practitioners invite viewers to play a sort of game by rearranging various objects in a composition to suit their own tastes. Avant-garde collectors began to buy De Maria's work. He was soon able to have them made up in steel rather than wood, and the games became more diabolical. His 1965 *Instrument for La Monte Young* looks like an innocent, slender metal box with a ball in it. But De Maria designed it with microphones at either end, which—in theory at least—could be hooked up to an amplifying system. Thus the "ping" of the ball would be amplified 50 times, and the viewer-listener who wanted to roll the ball back and forth could go deaf.

During the past year, another one of the minischools that De Maria helped to establish underground has emerged in the public eye earthwise. In the winter of 1961-62, De Maria sketched plans for a pair of mile-long walls, 12 ft. high and 12 ft. apart, to be built "somewhere in the Western United States." Though no collector could afford the \$750,000 needed to build it, De Maria and a fellow worker flew out to the Mojave Desert and chalked two half-mile-long lines on its surface. They photographed each other standing, or lying between the oppressively inward-pressing vertical lines. As De Maria points out, "There is a tactile double energy involved in the tightness of geometric form combined with the feeling of infinite space." His current "Three Continents" project will superimpose marks carved on the surfaces of deserts in Africa, India and North America onto a triple-exposure aerial photograph. Seems like a lot of trouble, not counting the cost of the airplane, but De Maria spent two weeks in January bulldozing stripes in the Sahara and has pictures to show for it.

Beyond Earthworks. The triumph of helping to prophesy into existence three lively minischools of art might make a lesser high priest rest on his oracles. Not De Maria, whose spring exhibition at Manhattan's Dwan Gallery takes him

DE MARIA WITH 'BED OF SPIKES'
. Never one to rest on his oracles.

beyond earthworks into a new idiom that is easily the most alarming yet. During the show, more than 2,500 visitors came to titter nervously or gaze in horrified wonder at De Maria's five Indian fakir-like steel beds. Together they contain 153 upright 11-in. spikes, honed to the sharpness of a Viet Cong punji stick and arranged with the geometric precision of the crosses that stand among the poppies in Flanders field.

Each visitor had to sign a release before he entered the room, exempting the gallery and De Maria in legal terms from any responsibility for accidents. The release served to emphasize what the show was about—"The danger that exists in the world today," Says De Maria: "It's a fact that within one hour 100 million people could be killed."

Still the most unnerving aspect of *The Bed of Spikes* lies not in the abstract danger that they symbolize but in their creator's evident delight in endowing them with all the murderous loveliness of a well-made gun, knife or racing car. "When danger and beauty are mixed," he maintains, "the result is a heightened beauty that surpasses so-called normal beauty." If De Maria's latest ritual objects prove as seductive as his previous ones, Manhattan's with-it galleries will soon be showing a large and loathsome selection of even more horrific art.

GRAPHICS

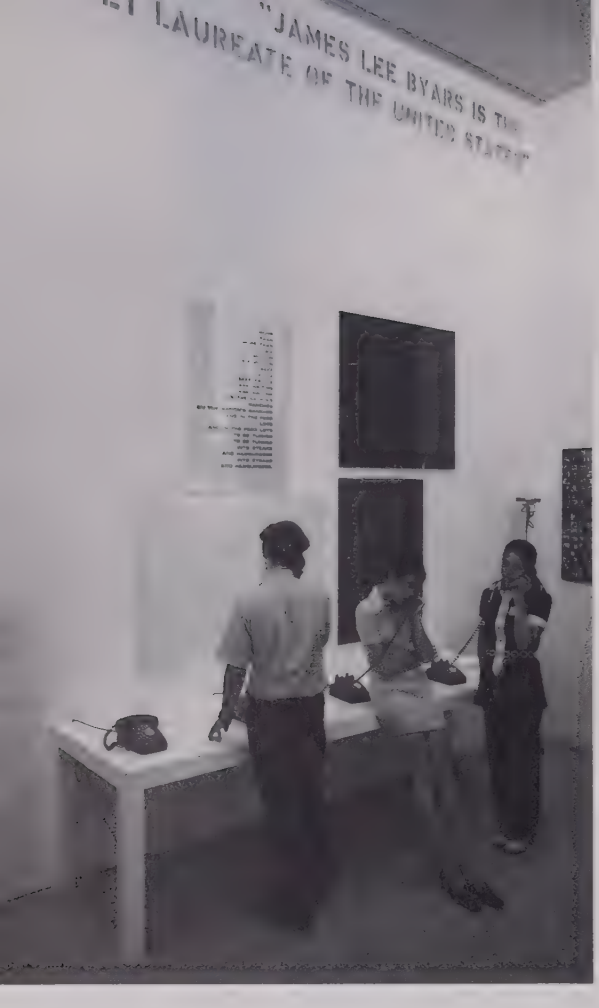
Unknown Masters in Wood

Just as U.S. servicemen and college students tack pictures of Raquel Welch or travel posters on their walls, so merchants and tradesmen in 18th and 19th century Japan delighted in cheap, mass-produced wood-block prints, or *hanga*. These genre pictures showed well-known actors or courtesans of the day, picturesque views of Mount Fuji and picaresque travel scenes. They were known as *ukiyo-e*, literally "pictures of the floating world," because to devout Buddhists everyday existence was a transient stage in man's journey to nirvana. Yet the lasting charm and skill with which the Japanese craftsmen imbued their images have influenced Western artists from Constable onward.

Currently, Los Angeles' U.C.L.A. art gallery is displaying 163 Japanese *ukiyo-e hanga*, perhaps one of the most comprehensive exhibitions ever. Its genesis was the acquisition by U.C.L.A.'s Grunwald Arts Foundation of some 650 prints from the estate of Frank Lloyd Wright. With this as a nucleus, U.C.L.A. commissioned Orientalist Harold P. Stern, assistant director of Washington's Freer Gallery of Art, to assemble a comprehensive survey of Japanese master prints and to write an accompanying book.

Simple but Soul. Wright was one of the floating world's most fervent admirers. He first saw prints at the home of another architect in the 1880s while still an apprentice, eventually amassed 5,000 prints. They were the only decorative art—aside from his own ornamentation—that he proposed for his buildings; even his architectural renderings have an Oriental look. The *ukiyo-e* "intrigued me and taught me much," he once said. "A Japanese may tell you what he knows in a single drawing, but never will he attempt to tell you all he knows. He is content to lay stress upon a simple element, insignificant enough perhaps, until he has handled it; then the slight means employed touch the soul of the subject so surely that while less would have failed of the intended effect, more would have been profane. The gospel of the elimination of the insignificant preached by the print came home to me in architecture."

Japanese printmakers eliminated the insignificant partly as a matter of economic necessity. The making of a *hanga* was a laborious process. First, the artist brushed his design onto mulberry pa-

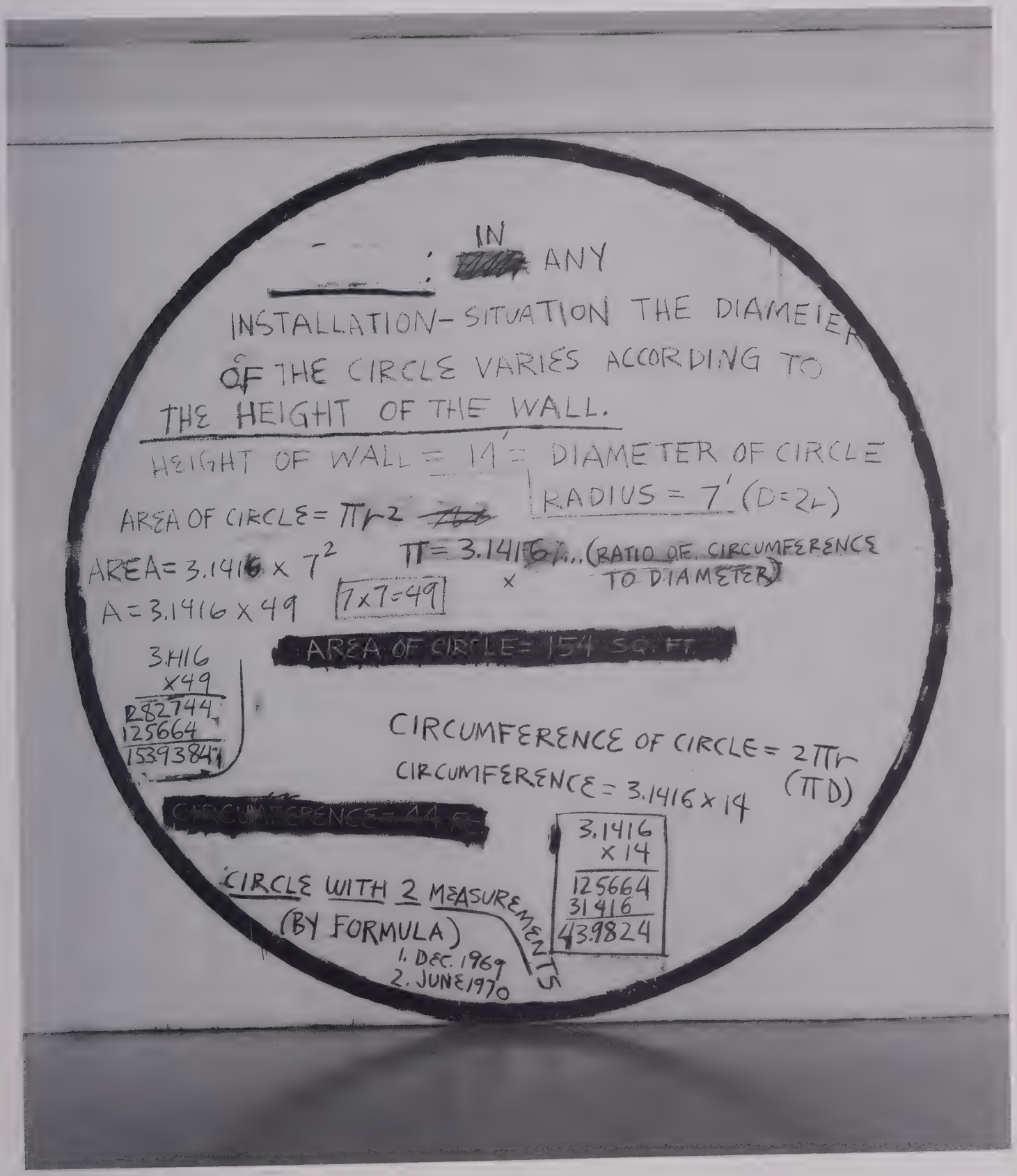


↑ John Giorno's *Giorno Poetry Systems*, which included four silkscreen poems (on the wall) and his *Dial-A-Poem* system (on the table): four telephones installed in the gallery, on which visitors could listen to a program of spoken poems that changed daily (see also p. 127). The poems could also be accessed from outside the gallery by calling the number (212) 956-7032. On the wall above is James Lee Byars's mural, stenciled in gold leaf, announcing that "JAMES LEE BYARS IS THE POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES."

→→ Mel Bochner's wall drawin *Measurement Series: By Formula (Circle)*, the dimensions of which were determined by the height the gallery's walls.

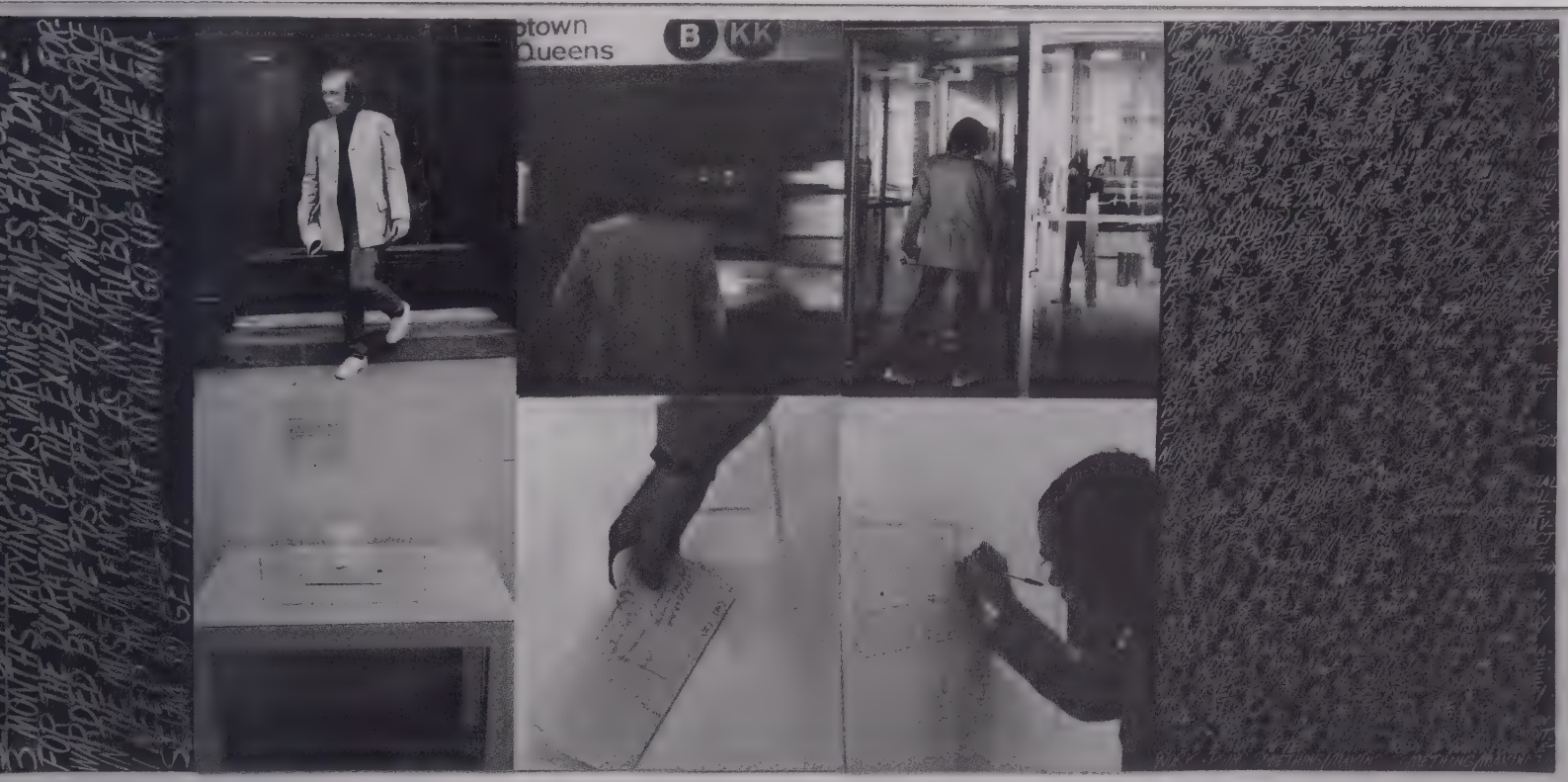
↗ Group Frontera's installation, *Especta*,was a video booth in which visitors answered questions on a range of subjects from issues of power to sexuality and everyday actions; the work allowed visitors to participate in the completion of the artwork, as well as to watch themselves live and on a delayed video tape played back on TV monitors outside the booth. The wall drawing to the right is Mel Bochner's *Measurement Series: By Formula (Circle)*.

→ View of the exhibition, with Jeff Wall's booklet, *Landscape Manual*, on the wall, and N. E. Thing, Co., Ltd.'s telex machines.


IN
ANY
INSTALLATION- SITUATION THE DIAMETER
OF THE CIRCLE VARIES ACCORDING TO
THE HEIGHT OF THE WALL.
HEIGHT OF WALL = 14' = DIAMETER OF CIRCLE
RADIUS = 7' (D=2r)
AREA OF CIRCLE = πr2
AREA = 3.1416 x 7 2
A = 3.1416 x 49
π = 3.14167... (RATIO OF CIRCUMFERENCE TO DIAMETER)
x
7x7=49
AREA OF CIRCLE = 154 SQ. FT.
3.1416
x49
28274
125664
153938
CIRCUMFERENCE OF CIRCLE = 2πr
(πD)
CIRCUMFERENCE = 3.1416 x 14
CIRCUMFERENCE = 44 FT.
3.1416
x 14
125664
31416
43.9824
CIRCLE WITH 2 MEASUREMENTS
(BY FORMULA)
1. DEC. 1969
2. JUNE 1970

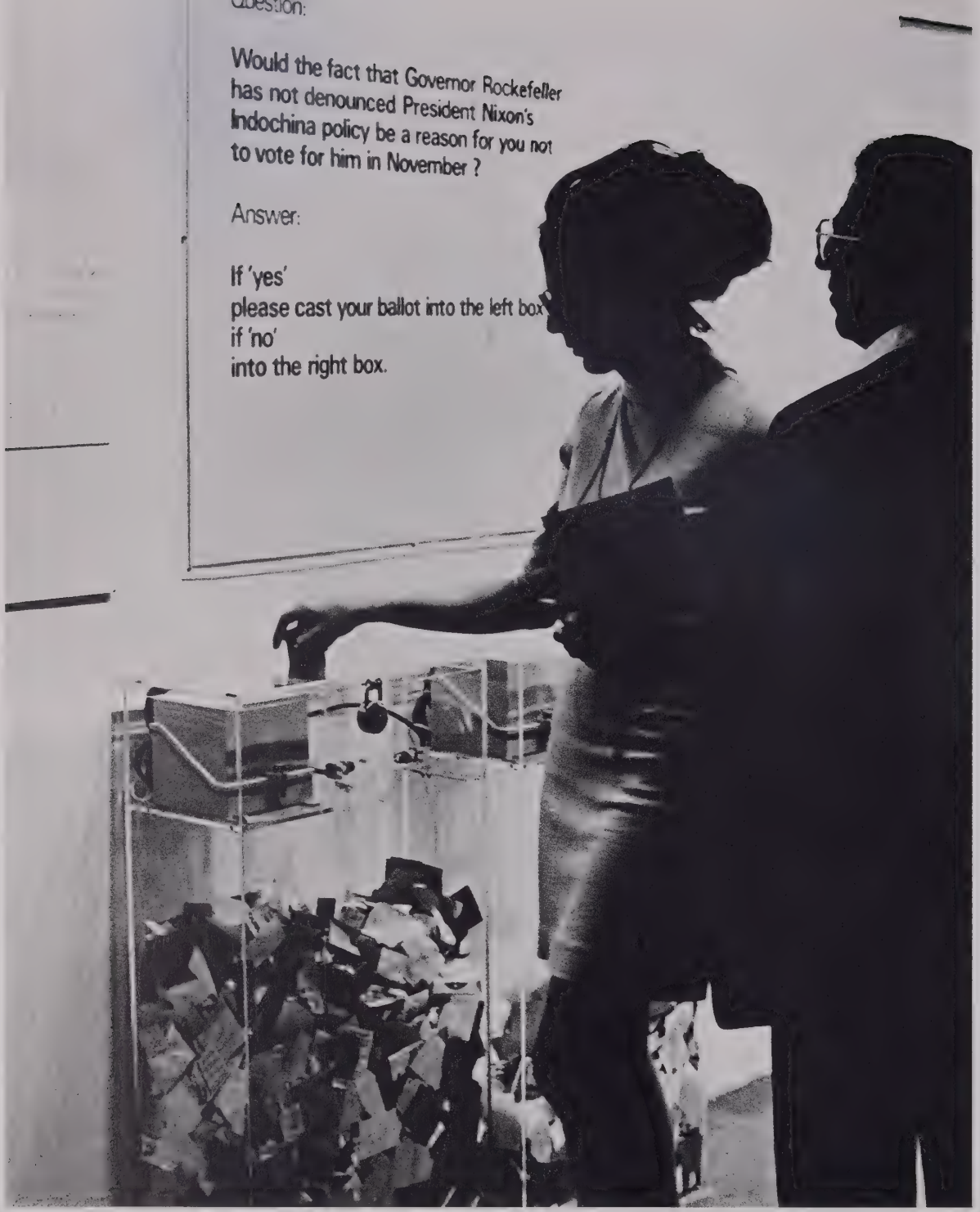
→ More than forty films, ranging in length from three minutes to eight hours, were shown simultaneously on the forty screens of the Olivetti "visual jukebox," designed by Ettore Sottsass. Many of the films were also shown in the Museum's auditorium throughout the course of the exhibition. Films shown included ones by Amado (Brazil), Baruchello (Italy), Robert Breer, Christo, Bruce Conner, Hollis Frampton, Les Levine, Standish Lawder, Willoughby Sharp (USA).

↓ Helio Oiticica's *Barracao Experiment 2* was a 12-foot (3.6 meter) high "nest" structure that the Brazilian artist invited the public to climb, rest, and sit in. Oiticica stated that the work was a "'leisure proposition' using different sorts of materials which are not important as such... but in the way they can be used during the exhibition."—Oiticica, MoMA Press Release, 1970.



↑ For his piece *Service Area*, Vito Acconci had his personal mail redirected to The Museum of Modern Art. In his catalog statement, Acconci notes that "the piece is performed (unawares) by the postal service, as the mail travels to the Museum, and by the senders of the mail, wherever they happen to be. I perform the piece actively by going to the Museum to pick up my mail."

→ On the opening night of the exhibition, Puerto Rican–born artist Rafael Ferrer placed his *Ice Piece*, eight tons of ice, in MoMA's sculpture garden and left it to melt. He is shown here sitting on the steps (right) with an unidentified woman.


Question:
Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November ?
Answer:
If 'yes'
please cast your ballot into the left box
if 'no'
into the right box.

↑ Han Haacke's *MoMA Poll* asked visitors to vote on the question, "Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina Policy be a reason for your not voting for him in November?" The question referred to Nelson Rockefeller's campaign for re-election as Governor of New York state. Nelson Rockefeller had been president and chairman of the MoMA Board, and his brother David was chairman at the time of the "Information" exhibition. Haacke did not reveal the content of his question until the night before the opening. The artist has noted that "David Rockefeller was not amused. Word has it that an emissary of his arrived at the Museum the next day to demand the removal of the poll. However, John Hightower, who had just been appointed director of the Museum, did not follow orders. He lasted in his job less than two years."—*Tate Papers*, 2009.

"ESSAY"

Kynaston McShine

Information [exh. cat.], 1970

Each artist was invited to create his own contribution to this book, a situation which meant that the material presented would be either directly related to the actual work in the show, or independent of it. Therefore, this book is essentially an anthology and considered a necessary adjunct to the exhibition. Contrary to the McLuhan thesis, books are still a major communication system, and perhaps becoming even more important, given "the global village" that the world has become. After all *Time* magazine is available almost everywhere on Wednesday mornings.

The material presented by the artists is considerably varied, and also spirited, if not rebellious—which is not very surprising, considering the general social, political, and economic crisis that are almost universal phenomena of 1970. If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having long hair, or for not being "dressed" properly; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room, and apply dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas. What can a young artist do that seems relevant and meaningful?

One necessity is, therefore, at least to move with the cultural stresses and preoccupations (as if you had a choice), particularly with the obvious changes in lifestyle. The art cannot afford to be provincial, or to exist only within its own history, or to continue to be, perhaps, only a commentary on art. An alternative has been to extend the idea of art, to renew the definition, and to think beyond the traditional categories—painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography, film, theater, music, dance, and poetry. Such distinctions have become increasingly blurred. Many of the highly intellectual and serious young artists represented here have addressed themselves to the question of how to create an art that reaches out to an audience larger than that which has been interested in contemporary art in the last few decades. Their attempt to be poetic and imaginative, without being either aloof or condescending, has led them into the communications area that INFORMATION reflects.

Superficially considered, some might seem to be directly involved with the dandyism and the "gesture," and while some are, others use these as approaches to more subtle, sophisticated, and profound ends. The activity of these artists is to think of concepts that are broader and more cerebral than the "product" of the studio. With the sense of mobility and change that pervades their time, they are interested in ways of rapidly exchanging ideas, rather than embalming the idea in an "object." However, the idea may reside on paper or film. The public is constantly bombarded with strong visual imagery, be it in newspapers or periodicals, on television or in the cinema. An artist certainly cannot compete with a man on the moon in the living room. This has, therefore, created an ambiguous and ironic position for the artist, a dilemma as to what he can do with contemporary media that reach many more people than the gallery.

In the re-evaluation of their situation, some artists have attempted to extend themselves into their environment and work with its problems and events. Some have become aware of their own bodies, in a way that has nothing to do with the accepted idea of the self-portrait, but more with the questioning and observing of sensations. Others have embraced natural phenomena in ways that are at times romantic and at times bordering on scientific.

An international climate that embraces Marcel Duchamp, Ad Reinhardt, Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, the I Ching, the Beatles, Claude Levi Strauss, John Cage, Yves Klein, Herbert Marcuse, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and theories of information and leisure, adds to the already complex situation. It is even more enriched by the implications, for example, of Dada, and more recently Happenings, Pop, and Minimal Art.

With an art world that knows more readily about current work, through reproductions and the wide dissemination of information via periodicals, and that has been altered by television, films, and satellites, as well as the "jet," it is now possible for artists to be truly international; exchange with their peers is now comparatively simple. The art historian's problem of who did what first is almost getting to the point of having to date by the hour. Increasingly, artists use mail, telegrams, telex machines, etc., for transmission of works themselves—photographs, films, documents, or of information about their activity. For both artists and their public it is a stimulating and open situation, and certainly less parochial than even five years ago. It is no longer imperative for an artist to be in Paris or New York. Those far from the "art centers" contribute more easily, without the often artificial protocol that at one time seemed essential for recognition.

Inevitably, the art film and videotape are growing in importance. It is quite obvious that at this point they are major mass media. Their influence has meant that the general audience is beginning to be unwilling to give the delicate responses needed for looking at a painting. Artists are beginning to use this to their advantage. They hope to introduce a wider audience to a more refined aesthetic experience.

The films and videotapes in this exhibition and listed in this book have often been described as "minimally structured," which means that the content is non-narrative and that the style, while being almost an extension of cinema verité, is like so much of the other work in the show, simply a method of distributing the visual information that interests the artist.

The general attitude of the artists in this exhibition is certainly not hostile. It is straightforward, friendly, coolly involved, and always allows experiences that are refreshing. It enables us to participate, quite often as in a game; at other times it seems almost therapeutic, making us question ourselves and our responses to unfamiliar stimuli. The constant

demand is a more aware relationship to our natural and artificial environments. There is always the sense of communication. These artists are questioning our prejudices, asking us to renounce our inhibitions, and if they are re-evaluating the nature of art, they are also asking that we reassess what we have always taken for granted as our accepted and culturally conditioned aesthetic response to art.

It is only too obvious that there are unpredictable implications for the established systems. For example, the whole nature of collecting is perhaps becoming obsolete, and what is the traditional museum going to do about work at the bottom of the Sargasso Sea, or in the Kalahari Desert, or in the Antarctic, or at the bottom of a volcano? How is the museum going to deal with the introduction of the new technology as an everyday part of its curatorial concerns?

I have purposely made this text short and very general. "Information" will allow for a more careful and thorough analysis of all the aesthetic and social implications of the work. My essay is really in the galleries and the whole of this volume.

MEMORANDUM TO THE TRUSTEES

John B. Hightower
June 26, 1970

The "Information Show," which is opening for the public on July 2nd, will undoubtedly be controversial. It is not as if this is an unfamiliar trait for an exhibition at the Museum. However, it seems appropriate for me to provide you with a forewarning.

In some of the recent meetings that have taken place on the policies of the Museum with members of the Trustees, the policy was perhaps most articulately stated by Blanchette Rockefeller in terms of controversial, political, and social material that may be part of the expression of contemporary artists. Her feeling was that the Museum should not under any circumstances initiate political action. However, as a museum of modern art we must be concerned with the interpretation of the work of contemporary artists even if this work reflects political and social concern, as much of it did in the Thirties. We have an implied obligation to present it if it conforms to the exhibition direction we want to take as well as the quality and standards of the Museum.

The "Information Show," which has been aborning for over a year, puts this principle to the test. The media for information exchange is currently and often being utilized by artists to express their concern over the war in Southeast Asia as well as what they see as human injustices. Some of the material in the show is tough, upsetting, and angry. There is also much that is funny and touching. It is bound to create a static, if you will pardon the pun, and I thought it best that you know about it.

INFORMATION EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Gregory Battcock
Arts, Summer 1970

Imagine: 1.) an art exhibition that started out by inviting artists' contributions without anybody having seen the works first; 2.) an exhibition with a catalog that will illustrate over 100 works many of which will not be included in the show; 3.) a catalog that lists artists that aren't represented in the show at all; 4.) an exhibition that includes works that are not included; 5.) an exhibition that is all about a new trend in art but that doesn't try to invent a label for the newly discovered trend.

Kynaston L. McShine's summer show at the Museum of Modern Art is just such an exhibition. The show is called "Information" and is not only representative of the new trend that sees museum exhibitions as exercises in art criticism (And why not? Art turned into art criticism a long time ago; the critics got left out of the picture) but places the curatorial folk in roles previously assumed by the critics. "Information" goes even one step further. Up until recently our modern curator had been content with the job of sniffing out new trends in art and identifying them through the exhibition process. Now the new curator (as opposed to the old curator who still throws together "retrospective"-type exhibitions, which are exercises in art history rather than art criticism) assumes a broader responsibility that extends beyond the formal realm of art. The new curator is more concerned with communication than with art; he is interested in information processes primarily and his job is to try to accommodate his new concern to the traditional structure and ambiance of his medium—the art museum.

That is the central problem encountered by new curators and, as one would expect, the problem has not been completely understood (it is just being discovered) and the resultant exhibitions are full of inconsistencies. It should be pointed out that our new curators (they include Jennifer Licht who did the recent "Spaces" show at MOMA, Seth Siegelaub who helped out with the recent "18 Paris IV.70" show on the Rue Mouffetard, and Pierre Restany who did "Art Concepts from Europe" at Bonino) are taking chances and aggressively seeking out change; nearly everybody else sits back and waits for change to arrive and then promptly welcomes it with open arms.

McShine is something of a Johnny-come-lately to the new camp. So is his museum. Nevertheless, his contribution is considerable. He has threatened the boundaries that delineate the traditional art exhibition system of information distribution and that's good. On the other hand, few summer visitors to the museum will find the show all that enthralling. "Why"?

The emphasis isn't on traditional aesthetic merit and criteria as far as the art is concerned. There is no formal, aesthetic analysis of the painterly qualities of the works, for example. There is a shift in the aesthetic sights and the introduction of some rather mild merchandising problems. However, the artists in the exhibition are, in general, still hell-bent on their own ego identification. That wouldn't have to be bad—if at least it were accompanied with genuine innovation in the realm of outrage, say, or humor, or scandal, or insult, or indignity—but, alas, there is little deliberate attempt at real disrespect in the show.

A little disrespect is what the show needs to get off the ground. The Guerrilla Theater people and the Guerrilla Art Action Group have introduced more progressive visual disrespect to the Museum of Modern Art in recent months than all their exhibitions thus far this year. There may not be any protests accompanying McShine's exercise in informatory experiment, and that may be too bad. "Information" is another example of liberal innovation in art and communication theory that simply isn't negative enough. Despite its progressive title and its number of artificially progressive art works, "Information" is a traditional exhibition that only partially threatens prevailing information concepts. It is rooted more in the past than in the present. The "movement" isn't going to get any place until it stops believing in the power of positive thought. If we believe in positive action, we must, automatically, believe that certain actions are negative—otherwise, there could be no positive in the first place. However, if we believe that there is no such thing as a negative action, we would then be liberated from the tyranny of positive thought and behavior. The new Conceptual and Anti-Art artists are on the verge of this discovery. McShine could have helped them by forcing them to move farther in the direction they are headed but, alas, his misplaced respect for objective criticism and "objective scholarship" (which he shares with his colleagues and trustees) prevented him from doing so.

If there can be no such thing as a negative gesture or action in art, then why are we hung up with so-called positive behavior? The destruction artists made their point by defeating their intentions. They demonstrated that, in art, there is no destruction. All art is destruction. [...]

THE INFORMATION FALL-OUT

Les Levine

Studio International, June 1971

The Museum of Modern Art's "Information": the style of the show was photographic, while at the same time there was no style. While there were some eighty artists in the show, there were no artists in the show: no one stood out any more than another. Every movement previous, such as Pop, Op, Color Painting, always had its figures. In Pop, it would be Andy Warhol, Roy Lichenstein, Oldenburg, and a few others. In Color Painting, it would have been Louis, Noland, and on down the line. In "Information," it was clear that the only outstanding figure was the curator. The curator in this situation becomes the artist. We have a "Woodstock" situation at the Museum of Modern Art. All of those people are brought together to make this show under the authorship of the curator. The curator presents the media with a package.

The value of shows like this is that, because they are so open, they tend to have no taste or choice position. Now having no taste or choice position is valuable because it is a supportive position. It supports the socio-economics of the art community. So it is decided that, rather than make breakthroughs with artists who hit home runs, you give the overall scene a vehicle to work with, an open communication system. If you see a show with eighty or more people in it, all of the people dissipate into one person, the curator, and the people who are not in it stand out more than the people who are in it [...]

If you present the media with a show that apparently has no particular artist, they will make one of the people involved "the artist." And seeing that none of the artists stand out any more than the others, the person who becomes "the artist" is the curator. The curator has made an artistic breakthrough. The curator has not only gathered the information, he has also made information: an artistic system that is supportive to the members of that system equally, rather than a system that supports particular figures in it and downgrades others.

"Information" came at a time when the Art Workers' Coalition had its many fights with the Museum of Modern Art. You can't take energy from a powerful system without giving that system a considerable amount of energy. The Museum of Modern Art then put on this giant "Information" show, which includes all of its enemies. It became more powerful than it ever was before. It got rid of the idea that there are going to be any further personal breakthroughs in art. Because the idea of the personal breakthrough means that there is a particular set of facts or group of information or sensitivity to a situation that is particular to a specific person or group. However, it is impossible for any one person to have more facts than any other person now.

SHOW AT THE MODERN RAISES QUESTIONS

Hilton Kramer

The New York Times, 2 July 1970

"Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?" This question — not the sort one is usually invited to entertain in an art exhibition—is, quite literally, the first question a visitor to the new "Information" exhibition at the Museum of Modem Art is asked to consider. The exhibition, organized by Kynaston McShine, associate curator of the museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture, is said to be "an international report on recent activity of young artists." It opens to the public today.

The poll of museum visitors on Mr. Rockefeller's political popularity is part of—no, come to think of it, it's the whole of—the contribution of Hans Haacke, a German-born artist who has lived in New York for some years, to the "Information" show. A transparent plexiglass box is provided for the "Yes" and "No" ballots. Yesterday, at the preview for museum members, the "Yes" votes were slightly more numerous than the "No" pile. This, presumably, as the bit of information Mr. Haacke wishes to convey to us.

After Mr. Haacke's poll, the visitor encounters an "information machine," otherwise called a "visual jukebox," provided by the Olivetti Corporation. This round structure contains forty individual screens through which one can view films ranging

from the merely boring to the thoroughly stupefying. This is information? So, at least, it pleases the museum to allege. Beyond this point, I am not sure I can give a very accurate or coherent account of what the visitor to this exhibition is invited to look at, listen to, sit down on, clamber over, go to sleep in, write on, stand in front of, read, and otherwise connect with. There are a great many blowups of junky photographic materials, much written matter, some green telephones on which one can dial-a-poem, documents—photographic and otherwise—of earthworks, all manner of facetious games, much in the way of Xeroxography, closed-circuit television on which the visitor can view himself, on delayed tape, answering various questions, and a table of political pamphlets denouncing war, racism, etc.

The exhibition is, in its way, amusing and amazing, but only because it upholds an attitude one had scarcely thought worth entertaining: an attitude toward the artistic process that is so overweeningly intellectual that it is, in its feeble results, virtually mindless. Here all the detritus of modem printing and electronic communications media has been transformed by an international gaggle of demi-intellectuals into a low-grade form of show business. It leaves one almost nostalgic for a good old-fashioned handmade happening.

What, you may well wonder, is politics doing in this potpourri of mind-flattening gags, gimmicks, and games? Is this the politicalization of art we have of late been hearing so much about? Possibly, but I doubt it. For what we are offered here is, if anything, a development even, worse to contemplate than the politicalization of art—it is the aestheticizing of political clichés. Having trivialized the very concept of art, the exhibition takes perhaps the next logical step by ingesting a large diet of serious social and political issues and transforming them into a waste product of aesthetic trifles.

There are more than 150 artists—or "artists"—from fifteen countries represented in the "Information" show. Clearly, the disturbance in the aesthetic atmosphere they represent is something that needs to be noticed. But there is a fundamental contradiction involved in devoting a large museum exhibition to a phenomenon that is, in its essence, a polemic against the whole concept of museum art and the museumization of art. It is too much, I suppose, to expect the Museum of Modem Art to recognize this fact, for such recognition might lead to a calamitous conclusion, namely, that there are just conceivably some aesthetic fashions that have not earned the right to be given museum hospitality. What a radical ideal! Certainly too radical for the museum to contemplate.

What this unhappy development really represents is a yearning to be delivered from the problems and complexities of modern industrial civilization. For all its indulgence in the paraphernalia of technology and communications systems, this so-called "Information" movement is nothing but an ill-conceived attempt to turn modem technological culture into a form of pastoral. It is, in other words, the latest species of aesthetic escapism—in this case, an escape from mind itself. It would be lamentable even if it were not so egregiously boring, but in the end it is the sheer weight of its boredom that is most repellent.

MIRACLES, "INFORMATION, RECOMMENDED READING"

Hilton Kramer

The New York Times, 12 July 1970

[...] Kynaston McShine, the museum's associate curator of painting and sculpture, who organized the show, was good enough to take me on a lengthy guided tour of the exhibition—explaining the rationale—or should I say the irrationale?—of each item in it. I must confess I found it difficult at times to follow his discourse. The night before I had spent some time examining the—what can one call it?—souvenir album which Mr. McShine had put together in lieu of a catalog of the exhibition. I was particularly struck by the list of "Recommended Reading." Had Mr. McShine himself read the "Recommended Reading"? Did it have any relation to the exhibition? I was too embarrassed to ask. After all, Mr. McShine has been very busy assembling this exhibition, which brings together more than 150 "artists"—amazing, isn't it, how people will cling to those outmoded expressions?—from 15 countries. When could he have found the time to read Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson's *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry* or Mao Tse-tung's *Problems of Art and Literature* or Manuel Villegas Lopes's *El Cine en la Sociedad de Massas: Arte y Communicacion*!

Mr. McShine's "Essay" for the souvenir-album was, on this question, no help at all. But it did raise another interesting question: "If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having 'long hair' or for not being 'dressed' properly; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem too inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room, and apply dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas. What can you as a young artist do that seems relevant and meaningful?"

The "Information" exhibition is Mr. McShine's answer to this question. The "relevant and meaningful" thing to do in the face of this grave political crisis is, apparently, to look at inane films through an Olivetti "visual jukebox," ask spectators questions on closed-circuit delayed-tape television, scrawl circles and other graffiti on the walls, go to town with the Xerox machine, collect a lot of pointless photographic junk, listen to a poem on the telephone, or simply go to sleep. Never mind what any of this has to do with Claude Levi-Strauss's *Structural Anthropology* or Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* or George Steiner's *Language and Silence*—more of the "Recommended Reading." Such questions are, I guess, irrelevant and impertinent. For Mr. McShine and his "artists," they don't qualify as "information."

What unmitigated nonsense this exhibition is! What tripe we are offered here! What an intellectual scandal!

09

EXHIBITION

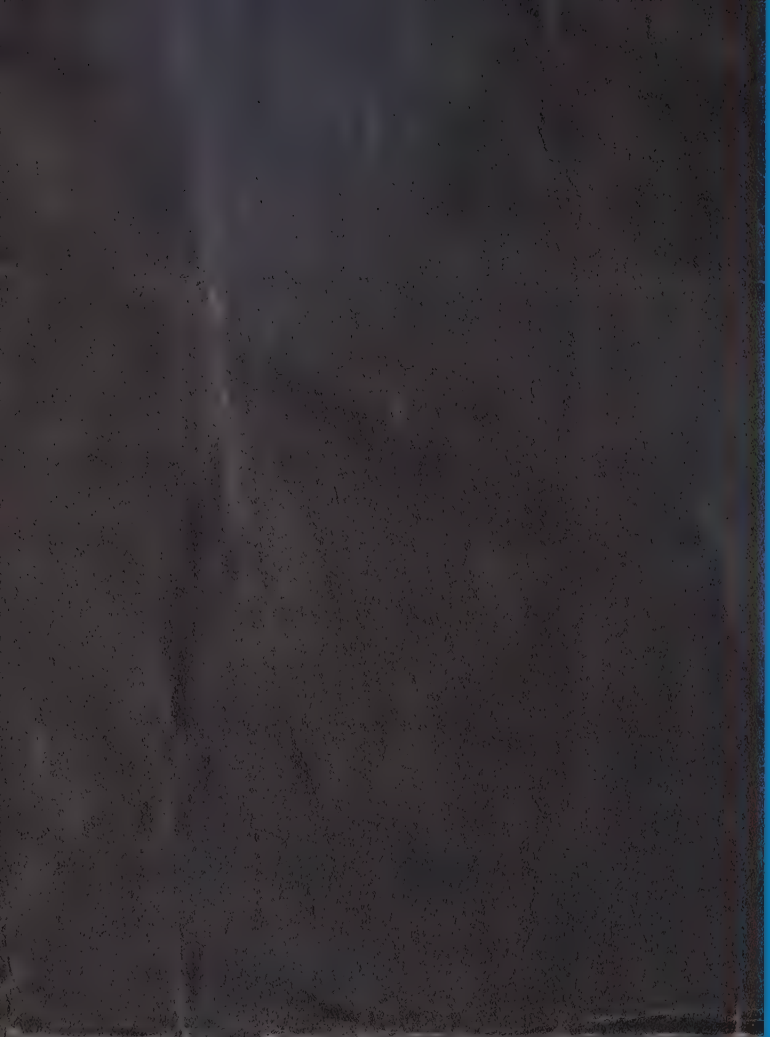
Sonsbeek 71

LOCATION

Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem, and sites around the Netherlands

DATE

19 June–
6 August 1971



CURATOR
Wim Beeren

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Vito Acconci, Bas Jan Ader, Carl Andre, Ben d'Armagnac, Richard Artschwager, Bruce Baillie, Douwe Jan Bakker, Geert van Beijeren, Joseph Beuys, Ronald Bladen, Boezem, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Javacheff Christo, Tony Conrad, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, Ad Dekkers, Jan Dibbets, Ellen Edinoff, Ger van Elk, Pieter Engels, Groep Enschede, E. R. G., Hans Eykelboom, Barry Flanagan, Hollis Frampton, Ernie Gehr, Dan Graham, Robert Grosvenor, Michael Heizer, Douglas Huebler, Ken Jacobs, Joepat, Donald Judd, Cooje Kapteyn, On Kawara, W. Knoebel, Hans Koetsier, Axel van der Kraan, Peter Kubelka, George Landlow, Standish Dyer Lawder, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Morning Moss, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Robert Nelson, Groep Noord-Brabant, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Nam June Paik, Panamarenko, Egbert Philips, Emilio Prini, Klaus Rinke, Peter Roehr, Ulrich Rückriem, Edward Ruscha, Fred Sandback, Jean-Michel Sanejouand, Wim T. Schippers, Richard Serra, Paul Sharits, Eric Siegel, Tony Smith, Robert Smithson, Kenneth Snelson, Michael Snow, Koert Steyl, Shinkichi Tajiri, Sojiki Tenjo, Yokoyama Tenjo, Carel Visser, Andre Volten, Hans de Vries, Lex Wechgelaar, Lawrence Weiner, Joyce Wieland

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Sonsbeek 71 und Sonsbeek 71 Activity (two-volume catalog). Arnhem: Stichting Sonsbeek, 1971. With texts by Wim Beeren and artists' statements, in Dutch and English. Some artists' contributions created specifically for the catalogue.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS
Car Blok, Atlas for a New Metropolis, Arnhem: Stichting Sonsbeek, 1971; Hanne Darboven, One Century, One Year, Deventer: The Octopus Foundation, 1971; Ed Ruscha, Dutch Details, Deventer: The Octopus Foundation, 1971; Sonsbeek 71 newssheet, Sonsbeek, 1971

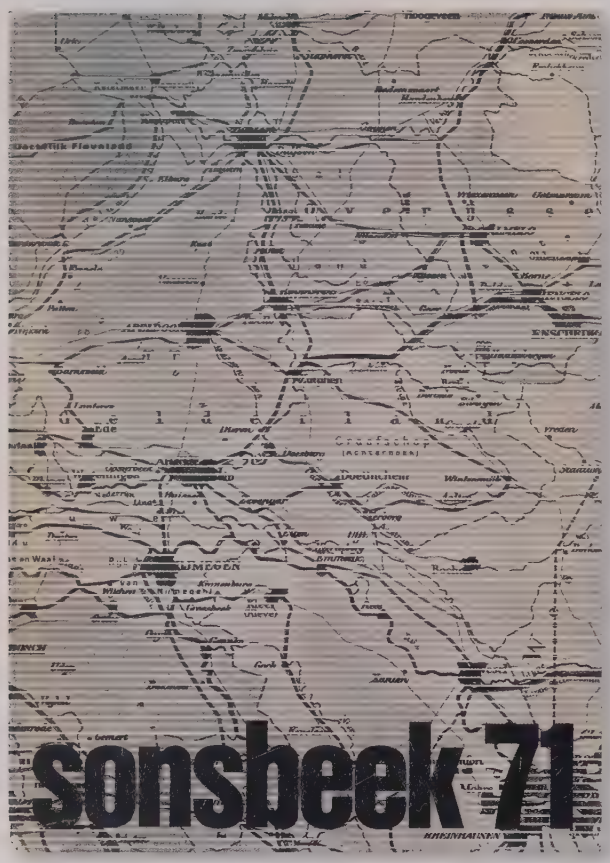
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: ca. 83
Number of artworks: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

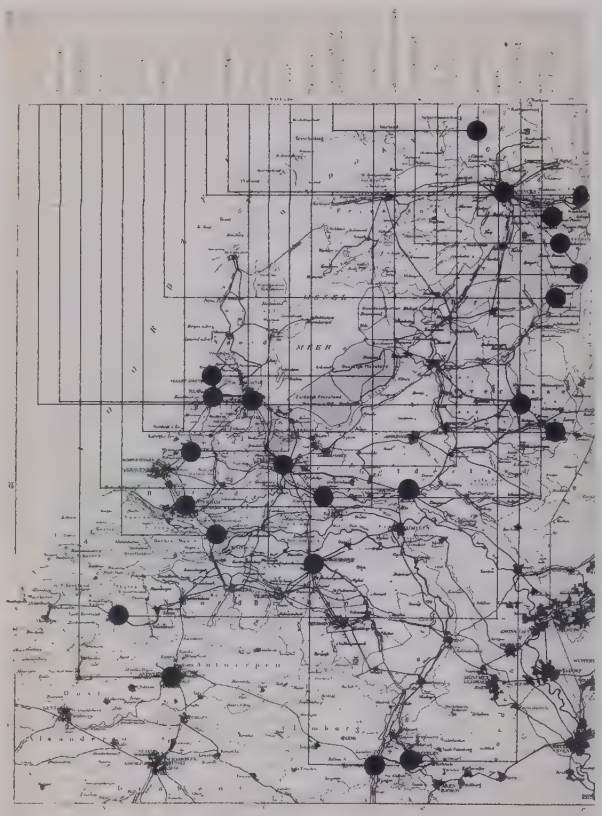
In the summer of 1971, the triennial sculpture show held in Sonsbeek Park in Arnhem, Holland, was transformed from a traditional outdoor exhibition into something very different. This is suggested by the official English translation of its title, "Sonsbeek buiten de parken." Meaning literally "Sonsbeek outside its borders," the exhibition's various publications rendered it as, "Sonsbeek beyond lawn and order." For "Sonsbeek 71" expanded beyond the park to outposts and ventures throughout the Netherlands, and it disrupted the sculptural order with the inclusion of Earth and Conceptual art, ambitious film and video programs, and a range of experimental artist projects.

The curator of the exhibition was Wim Beeren, who had cut his teeth on the new art while assembling "Op Losse Schroeven" at the Stedelijk Museum two years before, the companion exhibition to "When Attitudes Become Form." Like "Attitudes" curator Harald Szeemann, Beeren left his museum position to curate independently; although unlike Szeemann he would eventually return to institutional life. At Sonsbeek, he took full advantage of his newfound freedom. The exhibition theme was "space and spatial relations," which for Beeren went beyond three-dimensionality to include our changing experience of space as mediated by new forms of technology and communication. Hence the construction of a video studio in the park, discussions via conference call, newspaper projects, and Telex connections between Arnhem and information centers in five other cities.

Volunteers at these information centers coordinated projects with local artists, but the physical expansion beyond the lawn was accomplished primarily with works by international artists at close to twenty sites. These ranged from major cities, such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, to a small village where Joseph Beuys had visitors bicycle to a farm to hear tape recordings made by his friends. Ed Ruscha photographed buildings along a canal running between four towns and displayed the images in each of them, Richard Artschwager placed his *blps* around Utrecht, and Daniel Buren pasted stripes around the country. Robert Smithson found a site in a sand quarry near Emmen and built his first land reclamation sculpture, *Broken Circle–Spiral Hill*. Robert Morris constructed a circular astronomical *Observatory* in Ijmuiden, although it was not completed until the show was half over. Panamarenko failed in attempting to fly his homemade airship to Arnhem.

American artists were a major presence both across the Netherlands and in Arnhem. Of the fifteen sculptors who installed works in Sonsbeek Park, nine were from the United States, four from Holland, and two from Germany. With Claes Oldenburg's giant trowel, Ronald Bladen's immense black wedge, and Kenneth Snelson's tension-compression structure cantilevered over the pond, American sculptors dominated the scene. Because of the non-traditional work and the strong international representation, especially of Americans, the Dutch national artists association was vocal in its opposition to the show. Its slogan was "A million guilders of elite art for the elite." Critics complained of the difficulty of seeing an exhibition that required 650 miles (1,000 kilometers) of travel. And criticism did not come only from conservatives: Daniel Buren remarked that the show's radical aspects did not remove it from the institutional frame. For him, it was all still in the museum. For Beeren, however, it was more important to have moved from "exhibition" to "manifestation" to "activity" as the show developed. In this he connected "Sonsbeek 71" with the workshop model employed earlier in "Arte Povera + Azioni Povere" and "When Attitudes Become Form," and through decentralization he spread the workshop around an entire country. Seeking to investigate the realm of the spatial, Beeren experimented with the spatial parameters of the exhibition form itself in a way that would not be seen again for three decades.





18

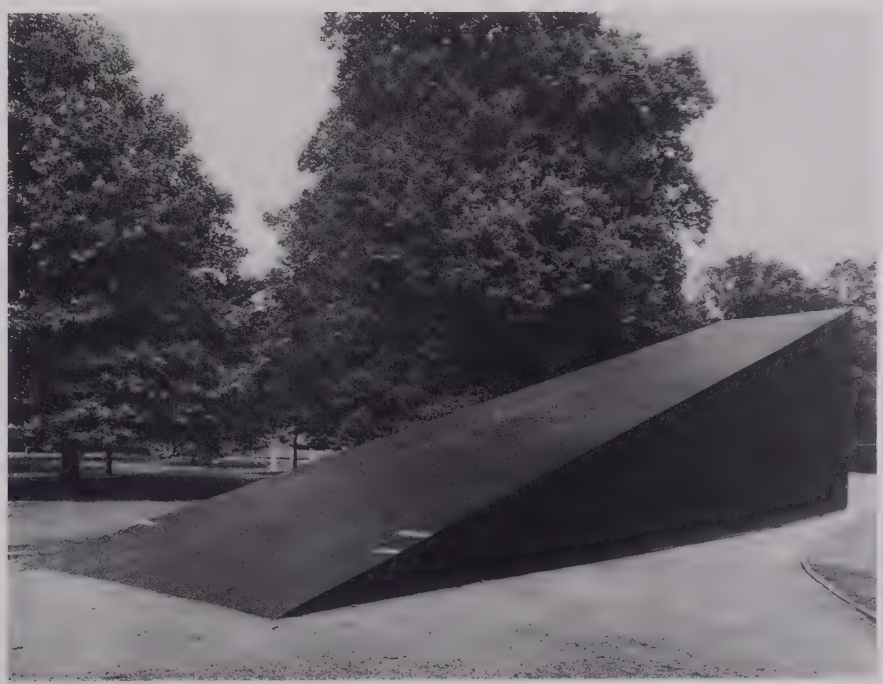
↑ Cover for the first volume of the two-part *Sonsbeek 71* catalog. The second volume featured the same design, but with the colors reversed.

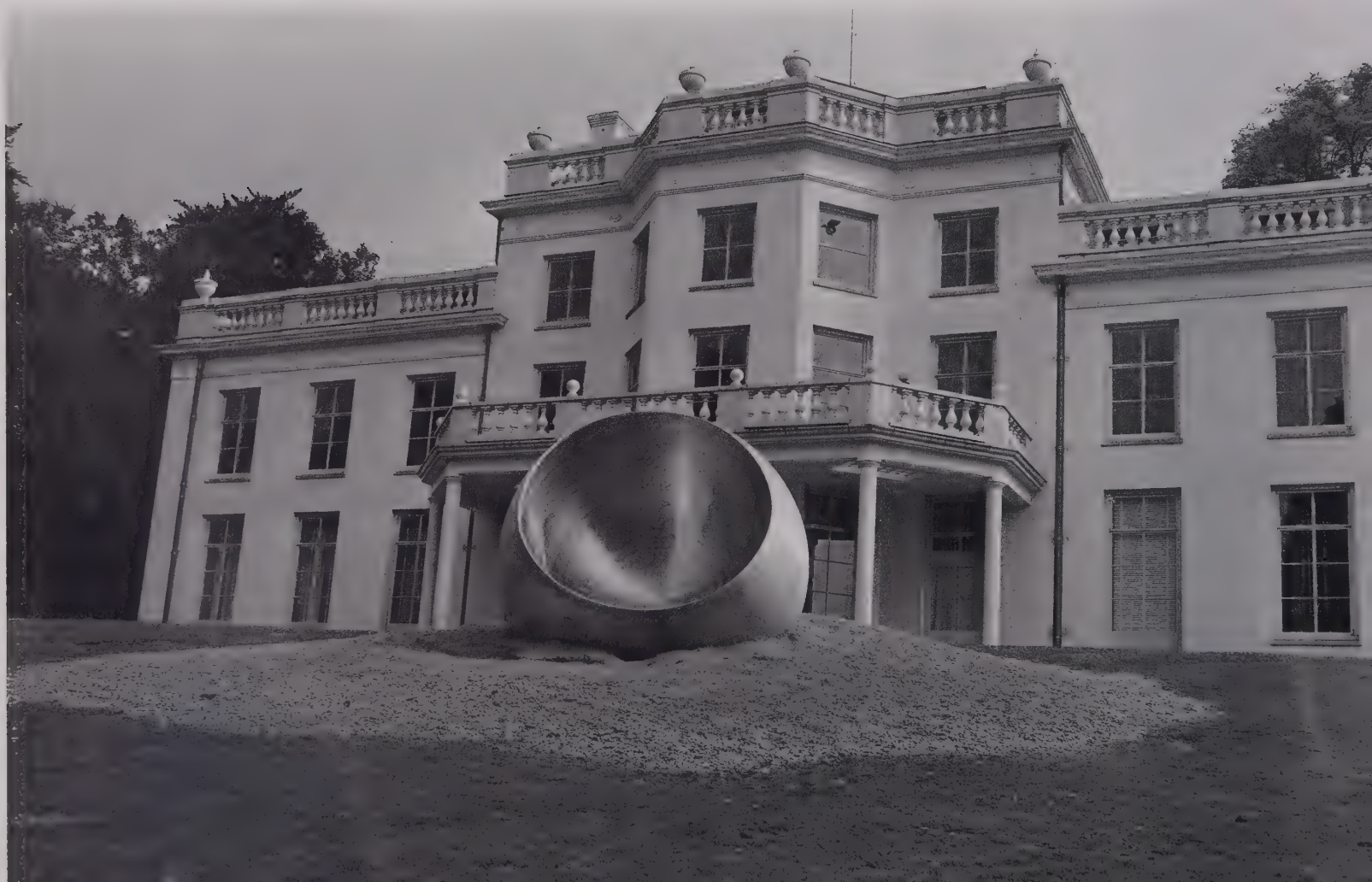
↗ Catalog page from *Sonsbeek 71* (first volume), featuring a map showing locations of artworks and venues across the Netherlands, including: Almelo (Ben d'Armagnac), Amsterdam (Ger Dekkers and Hans Koestier), Antwerp (Panamarenko), Arnhem (the main site, with twenty-five artists plus a film program), Dordrecht (Jean-Michel Sanejouand), Emmen (Robert Smithson), Enschede (an information center), Groningen (an information center, and Ed Ruscha), Haarlem (Douwe Jan Bakker), Leiden (an information center, and Boezem), Maastricht (an information center, and Lex Wechgelaar), Pieterburen–Groningerwad (Richard Long), Rotterdam (an information center), Santpoort–Velsen (Robert Morris), Stadskanaal (Ed Ruscha), and Ter Apel (Ed Ruscha).

→ As part of "Sonsbeek 71," Ed Ruscha created the photographic series *Dutch Details*, showing houses and sites along the Groningen canal. The photographs were exhibited in four venues along the canal and were used for Ruscha's thirteenth booklet, *Dutch Details* (1971), published by the Octopus Foundation.

↑ View of Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem, with Claes Oldenburg's *Sculpture in the Form of a Trowel Stuck in the Ground*.

→ Sonsbeek Park, showing Ronald Bladen's *The Wedge*, installed near the Villa Sonsbeek.





↖↖ View of Sonsbeek Park, with Wim T. Schippers's 26-foot (8-meter) long *Slightly Damaged Car*, and Tony Smith's *Arch*.

↖ Sol LeWitt's *Modular Piece* in Sonsbeek Park.

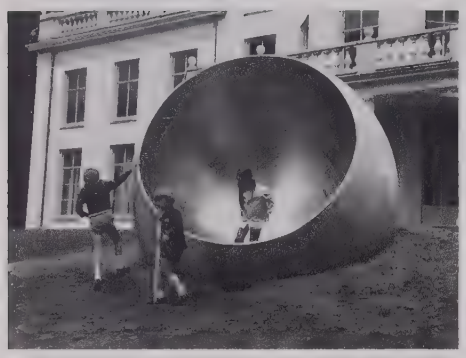
← The mansion in Sonsbeek Park (Villa Sonsbeek), with André Volten's stainless steel open spherical sculpture.

↑ The Conference Hall at the park was designed by Eventstructure Research Group, and was built out of polyester material coated in PVC. It had a diameter of 59 feet (18 meters) by 26 feet (8 meters) tall. Three new temporary structures were designed for the site by the Group.

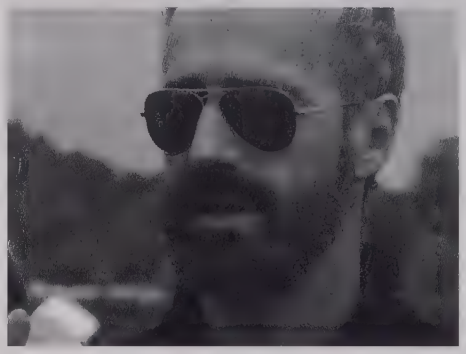
→ View of Sonsbeek Park, with Keneth Snelson's *Easy K* stretching out across the lake.

↖← Robert Morris's *Observatory*, an Earthwork dug into the landscape near Haarlem. The work was destroyed later in 1971 to make way for a housing development, and was rebuilt elsewhere with Morris's permission.

↑ Robert Smithson created the Earthworks *Spiral Hill* and *Broken Circle* in Emmen, in the northeast of the Netherlands. This was the first work by Smithson to "reclaim" an industrial site.



←← Stills from Jef Cornelis's TV program, "Sonsbeek beyond lawn and order," showing children playing in André Volten's stainless steel sculpture installed in front of the Villa Sonsbeek, Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem.
← Inside the video studio at Sonsbeek Park.



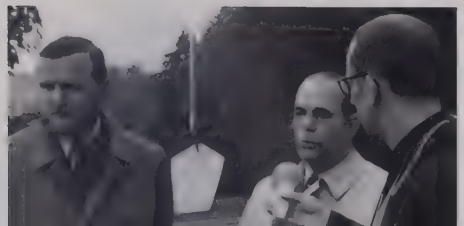
↙↙ Kenneth Snelson's *Easy K* installed at Sonsbeek Park.
↙ Robert Morris being interviewed. Morris was unimpressed by the apparent technophilia of the exhibition.

↙↙ Daniel Buren being interviewed.
↙ Upstairs in the inflatable Conference Hall designed by Eventstructure Research Group.

↙↙ Aerial view of Robert Smithson's *Broken Circle*, Emmen.

↙↙ Local officials being interviewed.
↙ In a meadow near Antwerp, Panamarenko's airship fails to take off.

↓ Claes Oldenburg's giant trowel sculpture installed at Sonsbeek Park.
↓↓ Wim Beeren being interviewed: "It started out as an exhibition and grew into an activity."



FROM EXHIBITION TO ACTIVITY

Wim Beeren

Sonsbeek 71 (exh. cat., Volume 1)

The plans for the exhibition were based on the desire to give expression to a number of directions in plastic art that have been manifesting themselves during the last five years. The tendency toward an expansion of scale, toward maximization as one of the determining features of a work, made us decide to use as the criterion for the selection of sculptures for the park the degree of involvement of a work with the given properties of the park architecture. In concrete terms, this means that a number of artists have been asked to design a work for a location of their own choosing. In cases where the costs involved were too high, agreements concerning rent, sponsorship, etc. were reached. In this way the principle of making this exhibition could be accepted and maintained: we departed from the usual procedure of collecting sculptures and deciding how they should be arranged. All artists with the exception of Ronald Bladen, who worked with photographs, have seen the park and decided on a location before designing a work or having an existing design carried out. This working method and our awareness of the necessity of such a method has given the exhibition its theme: spatial relations.

In view of this theme, we became particularly interested in the many artists who would regard the park not as an optimal but rather as a somewhat unnatural environment. That is why we went "beyond the confines" of Sonsbeek and included the entire country as our field of operation so that we could offer artists the location that could truly engage their interest. By making numerous contacts we succeeded in forming a group of participants, institutions, government departments, and private persons who joined in the organizational activities of "Sonsbeek buiten de perken." Out of the many discussions between participants and artists (for which our organization acted as intermediary, as indeed in applying for practical, material, and financial aid), projects were born, such as that of Michael Heizer (Limburg), Richard Long (Groningen), Ed Ruscha (Groningen), Robert Morris (Noord-Holland), which are intended for an existing landscape situation in spite of the considerable degree of autonomy they possess. We have also acted as intermediary for various city situations: Dan Flavin (Rotterdam), Richard Artschwager (Utrecht), Daniel Buren, Ger Dekkers, Hans Koetsier (Amsterdam). A sculpture is an independent entity, but it is also one of the elements by which we can conceive of space. Other matters, too, contribute to our conception of space: trees, parks, buildings, and roads, of course, but also the means by which space is experienced, such as television, which shows thousands of aspects of that space on its screen. All these are elements that make us aware of the scale being employed, which determine how involved we are with one another, or how detached, and which influence our behavior. Projects such as those designed by the Noord-Brabant group and carried out by a number of artists and architects at Enschede, have paid special attention to this aspect of the space we live in.

It has become one of Sonsbeek's aims to stimulate a greater public awareness that such things as visual phenomena exist, and that those phenomena often concern space. Until recently, those visual phenomena were confined to the realm of science or to the grounds of museums. But now the time has come when artists are deeply involved in those spatial relations, and the attention they pay to them has long since ceased to be expressed in mass alone. Spatial relations mean also: to be involved. And the type of involvement can determine the way spatial relations are observed. What it is the space between Amsterdam and London? The line between two abstract points on a map? The space you hurtle through in an aeroplane? The space that can be experienced somewhat more rationally when traveling in a train or a boat? The space by day or by night? Or perhaps the space that is seen through an intermediary? The space that impresses us on TV, or that hardly appeals to our imagination any more on the telephone?

We have very consciously not considered this Sonsbeek as a sculpture exhibition because, as stated, there is so much more that enables the artist to give stature to a particular space. And also because a sculpture and certainly a "sculpture exhibition" is yet another subject requiring agreement. This group of works did not come together in order that previously made agreements might be kept or that the discussion of a similar topic—modern sculpture since Rodin—might be continued.

Therefore, we have accepted the fact that the communication media (modern or old) have contributed greatly to our conception of space. And that in addition these media have forged an indestructible link between the time factor and space. A considerable portion of world events are conveyed to us by those means of communication and in no other way. Information is becoming an almost independent phenomenon.

The loneliest events become food for the masses. Communication media have intrigued artists, too, and they are using them in their own very personal ways: as a means of registration and communication or as an independent visual phenomenon. The communication media are housed in the Information Center in the Sonsbeek Park, and in similar centers in Groningen, Enschede, Maastricht, Rotterdam and Leiden. We have been able to incorporate a number of these communication media in our exhibition.

FILM, which was until recently primarily a documentary and instructive aspect of the visual arts, has in the past few years—due in part to the influence of films by Andy Warhol—come to the fore as an autonomous form of visual expression, in so far as it also registers and makes us aware of processes of space and time, often synchronously with our slow "human" tempo. Film was used in various ways for the exhibition:

1.) Films have been made at our request by the artists. Boezem (commissioned by the town of Leiden), Jan Dibbets, and Ger van Elk.

2.) A documentary film about Sonsbeek was directed by Joes Odufré, the scenario was by Title Tybout. It deals with most of the projects in Sonsbeek 71.

There is an extensive program of recent films concerning the experience of space and the experience of human stature. This program is shown in direct connection with the Sonsbeek park in the film pavilion of the Kroller-Muller Museum and the Municipal Museum of Arnhem.

THE VIDEO FILM had already been brought into direct contact with the latest developments in the visual arts when Gerry Schum started his Television Gallery and combined several projects that really dealt with the medium of film and sometimes even the medium of TV film, in his *Land Art* (1969). Since cutting is a secondary factor in video, whose force lies in the synchronomy with events, video emphasizes an element that had already become an important feature in underground films: the adjustment to our standards of time. Moments in time are no longer synthesized and therefore accelerated into a brilliant film sequence. Cubist or surrealist composition in the art of filmmaking has been replaced by a succession of images determined by a natural course of events. Many—particularly American—artists are exploiting the medium and have arrived at an autonomous or at any rate abstractive sign language that is achieved more often by electronic programming than by the camera. A video studio has been installed at Sonsbeek, and a number of artists have been invited to realize their projects there. It will eventually be possible for other artists to apply for the use of the studio.

THE TELEX is a familiar medium: it is of considerable importance to Sonsbeek because artists all over the country can send in their plans via various communication centers.

THE SMALL OFFSET-PRINTING WORKS makes it possible to distribute a limited number of copies of such plans in Sonsbeek Park.

THE CONFERENCE TELEPHONE will enable us to hold discussions on the projects with interested parties in the communication centers all over the country.

THE PRESS has a special significance for Sonsbeek because it not only reacts to Sonsbeek but has also made Sonsbeek possible in a very special way. A number of artists will be given the opportunity to express their opinions on one page of a newspaper or magazine.

THE CATALOGUE contains, besides a description of the projects and plans, contributions by artists who use this medium as an expression of their ideas.

In addition to these forms of communication and exchange there is the possibility of direct talks. In the conference hall, where slide programs are held daily, visitors may talk directly with each other and with members of the Sonsbeek staff, educative or otherwise. There will be opportunities in the park and elsewhere in Arnhem for artists to create events.

PUBLICATIONS. The Rotterdam Art Foundation is publishing Cor Blok's *Atlas voor eon nieuwe metropool* (*Atlas for a new Metropolis*) devoted to Sonsbeek Park. The Octopus Foundation in Deventer is Publishing two projects in bock form: one by Hanne Darboven and one by Ed Ruscha (about the route Groningen-Ter Apel). Sonsbeek's own publications include the news-sheet "Buiten de perken" (175,000 copies) and the Dutch-English catalogue in two parts (10,000 copies).

It is evident that the term "exhibition" is only partly relevant. We have turned to the word "manifestation" and subsequently to "activity". "Sonsbeek 71" is more like a workshop than a show. This means that the Dutch public will not be able to take a walk amongst impressive statues, but that it will have the opportunity of a much closer involvement. A project on the Groningen mudflats cannot attract the masses (unless via the medium of film), but a project in a daily newspaper such as *De Volkskrant* or *De Telegraaf* makes hundreds of thousands of people aware of Sonsbeek. The publications, films, events, and the communication centers ensure intensive contact. The road to this form of activity has been a long one, and many difficult decisions had to be taken on the way. It has been a road leading from a precise exhibition program to a workshop. It is a road away from relative comfort to an acceptance of direct responsibilities and open endings.

A plan made in 1970, for which the funds had in part been obtained, was reshaped to such an extent that it had to be reviewed again by the authorities for 1971 as a new plan, and it had to cover once again the same ground of lengthy applications, advice, discussions, and decisions. Projects that had more or less been housed in the park were set up on a larger scale and more satisfactorily elsewhere in the country, but required entirely new contacts, long drawn-out negotiations, and so forth. A plan for realization was suddenly reduced to a point of departure for activities. We went from product to process. That is what we wanted and still want. The invited artists did not come to Sonsbeek as if to the inevitable end of the road, but to a place where they could start out from. The public that will visit Sonsbeek will have to use what they see to form their own ideas—they must not expect to see a collection of aesthetic sights. [...]

SONSBEEK IN THE NORTH, FORTY PEOPLE A DAY IN PICTURES BY RUSCHA

Dolf Welling

Haagsche Courant, 10 July 1971

The people of Groningen can experience a little bit of "Sonsbeek" in their own city, and so can the people of Maastricht. They are not really going for it yet. The continuation of the successful series of sculpture exhibitions in the lovely park in Arnhem has indeed gone completely "off-limits." We had to make a 700-kilometer [435-mile] trip to see part of the northeastern section. The weather was

nice, thank you. But the same effort would have brought us halfway to the Riviera, and that is also something to consider. [...] At the Kunstkring in Almelo, open until five o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived too late. At the university campus in Drienerloo even the editor of the university newspaper had never heard of an art project by Richard Serra. It must have been canceled. Wim Beeren did not point this out to us when we showed him our planned itinerary. By now it was too late to see Enschede's information center in action.

[...] It has already become clear that "Sonsbeek buiten de perken" is a misunderstanding, albeit an instructive one. Our country is fairly small, but the art projects have been spread out to such an extent that few people can get their share of the whole. [...] The lesson to be learned is that such a drastic departure from the usual exhibition format will fail to find an audience. If one intends to present a number of projects as variations on the theme of spatial relationships, they should be concentrated within an area of at most 30 kilometers [20 miles] in diameter.

THE PHRASEOLOGY OF SONSBEEK 71

Lambert Tegenbosch

Raam 75, July 1971

We have now arrived at the point where the museum is the irrevocable destiny of all art. From the Egyptian art of the pyramids to primitive art meant to appease the gods—everything, whatever purpose it once served, will finally end up in that place where it serves no purpose at all. Where, in fact, a lack of purpose has slowly risen to be the quintessence of all art. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (and even today in the artistic subculture that is officially ignored) art served as a means to present the artist himself, his individuality, his exceptionality, in the midst of a culture considered to be inhuman, and furthermore as a means to establish the reign of Art, whatever that may be. And even these products have ended up in the museum. The artists participating in Sonsbeek work for nothing but this museological condition. It may be anti-art, it certainly has nothing to do with their individuality any more, it may be whatever it wants to be, as long as it has a museum-ish quality. That is the progress art has made. [...] Whoever follows the avant-garde is always on the right track. And the track of the avant-garde can be easily found: in the avant-garde museum—the museum that no longer conserves and exhibits, but stimulates. The grave has become an engine.

SONSBEEK: SPECULATIONS, IMPRESSIONS

Kasha Linville

Artforum, August 1971

This was a show that became radical in spite of itself. Rumored to feel cramped by his curatorial situation at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Wim Beeren left in 1970 to take over the organization of the Sonsbeek exhibition, a triannual show held in an eighteen-century formal park in Arnhem. Like many Europeans, Beeren lacks taste in the sense of fully apprehending the art he is dealing with; but he does sense where the action is. His lack of discrimination, coupled with the desire to make this show an encyclopedia of the most recent art, turned the "Sonsbeek 71" exhibition into an incongruous hodgepodge of quality and schlock.

On arrival in Amsterdam, I expected to find an exhibition ready to open on 19 June. Instead, I found total confusion. The show had obviously gotten out of hand and had become an organizational monster that Beeren and his entire staff were frantically trying to bring under control. In the wet, green park in Arnhem, tents were still deflated; Ronald Bladen couldn't paint his sculpture because of the constant downpours: Robert Grosvenor was in a huddle with worried helpers trying to figure out how to mount his sculpture for the process required a crane so heavy it would sink into the sodden soil if it were used in the park; in the movie tent where an ambitious film program was to be shown daily, a young kid was struggling to operate the single projector—few films were actually available as the majority had to go unexpectedly to The Hague to be sufficiently reinforced to withstand continuous showings. The exhibition gave an overwhelming impression of Beeren's inability to handle anything he couldn't foresee. The Sonsbeek catalog states his dream of a loosely structured show that would unfold during the summer like a piece of process art. But he lacked the necessary administrative flexibility to handle it. As a result, the exhibition in its initial stages began to feel like a Surrealist theater piece with Beeren and staff as the unwilling cast. (I can't vouch for what happened after 30 June. Serra was to do a piece and a second section of the catalog was to be published by 15 August with photo-documentation of the whole summer's activities.)

Obviously Beeren used the occasion and the park as a pretext to include avant-garde artists of every nationality and tendency that he thought important: filmmakers, sculptors, process artists, conceptual artists, earth artists, minimal artists, video experimentalists, etc. The exhibition became the victim of his ambition—bursting beyond the confines of the park like an overstuffed sausage spreading into towns all over Holland [...]

SCULPTURE AT SONSBEEK

Carel Blotkamp

Studio International, September 1971

The sixth international exhibition of sculpture in the Sonsbeek Park at Arnhem was open to the public from 19 June until 15 August.

This year's Sonsbeek exhibition was totally different from all others. Previous exhibitions had a twofold purpose: to show a cross-section of contemporary sculpture, sometimes with special attention to new trends, and to present a selection of European sculpture since Rodin as an historical basis for judging recent art. In those years the sculptures, two or three hundred or more, were scattered in the pseudo-natural surroundings of Sonsbeek Park, while smaller works were housed in specially designed pavilions.

This year the presentation has been entirely different: no survey from Rodin etc. etcetera., but a choice of works produced in the last five years or so; no three hundred sculptures scattered in the park but only fifteen works by different artists; no shrines for, say, Brancusi or Gonzalez, but three inflatable pavilions designed by the Eventstructure Research Group and used as an information center, debating room, and video studio. The exhibition extended outside sculpture and Sonsbeek Park and spread over the Netherlands, while texts and concepts published in newspapers and weeklies reached an enormous number of people. Information centers connected by telex with the central pavilion in Sonsbeek were installed in five cities, and projects were realized from the Waddebeilanden (Frisian Islands) in the north to Maastricht in the south. Sonsbeek had grown "beyond lawn and order," and to see everything involved traveling at least 1,000 kilometers [650 miles].

The exhibition was dedicated to movements in art—not just sculpture—that had come to the surface in the last few years. It started where the exhibition of 1966 ended. In the park at Arnhem were works by the Americans, Andre, Bladen, Grosvenor, Judd, LeWitt, Oldenburg, Fred Sandback, Snelson, and Tony Smith; by the Netherlanders Ad Dekkers, Wim Schippers, Carel Visser, and Andre Volten; by the Germans Wolf Knoebel and Ulrich Rückriem. Some of these were gigantic and most were designed for a special site. Where this was not so, the artists themselves in general chose a site. The organizers realizing that some artists would find an artificially created environment restricting, provided opportunities to execute works in other surroundings.

Some of the projects: Daniel Buren glued his striped papers on, in, and near the various buildings where parts of the exhibition were on show; Richard Long scratched a *Celtic Sign* in the dunes of one of the Waddebeilanden (a photograph documenting this work was exhibited in the otherwise folklore Museum van het Wad at Leens in Groningen province); in the same province Edward Ruscha, having studied the almost continuous flow of houses along the canal from the city of Groningen to Ter Apel, a total of 30 kilometers [20 miles], made a series of photographs, starting at one side of a bridge and taking six photographs approaching a specific detail, a fence or a window pane, on the other side of the canal, and then taking six photographs from the other direction (the series was exhibited in four localities along the canal and was also used for Ruscha's thirteenth booklet, *Dutch Details*, recently published by the Octopus Foundation); in a sandpit near Emmen, Robert Smithson had a semicircular dyke built out into the standing water, joined to a semicircular canal dug out in the land, together almost describing a circle. An asymmetrical boulder was placed in the centre of this circle, and one could meditate on the work from the vantage of a specially created hill, with a path spiralling to the top; at Maastricht, Lex Wechgelaar erected a *Modern Ruin*, a monument to today's housing.

At Santpoort, near IJmuiden, Robert Morris realized the *Observatory* (the maquette was used on the poster of his recent Tate exhibition). To see Josef Beuys's contribution, one had to travel to Kruiningen-lerseke in Zeeland, walk or cycle, as part of the piece, from the station to the village of Vlake, where in a farmhouse one could listen to a tape recording of interviews given by friends of Beuys who had known him during a period of depression and helped him to get over it, complemented by fragments from the writings of Julien Green; in Amsterdam a text of Hans Koetsier's was published by a newscaster on top of the Carlton hotel; and in the Tropenmuseum, Ger van Elk exhibited a small piece of wood painted white in the mid-Atlantic.

Other projects in the country were realized by Ben d'Armagnac, Richard Artschwager, Douwe Jan Bakker, Boezem, Ger Dekkers, Eykelboom, Panamerenko, and Sanejouand. There were several non-sculptural activities. An extensive film program was presented in a tent in the garden of the Gemeentemuseum at Arnhem. Two different whole-day programs, released on alternate days, comprised films by nearly sixty artists, among them Vito Acconci, Bas Jan Ader, Christo, Jan Dibbets, Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman, Peter Roehr, Wim Schippers, Richard Serra and Michael Snow. *Land Art* and *Identifications*, Gerry Schum's productions for German television, and a slightly older film about Fluxus activities were also shown. Video recordings were available in the video studio in the park, and some artists worked there for a week or more: Nam June Paik, Jack Moore, Eric Siegel, Stanley Brouwn, and Joe Patiniot.

In the park, and in Arnhem, events were created by Klaus Rinke, the dancer Koert Stuyf, and groups of artists and actors. Finally, an important addition to tactile and visual works in the exhibition were concepts published in newspapers and in the catalogue by Daniel Buren, Hanne Darboven, Pieter Engels, Douglas Huebler, On Kawara Yutaka Matsuzawa, Mario Merz, Emilio Prini, Lawrence Weiner, and others.)

Sonsbeek 1971 comprises many works and met with contradictory reactions. The Artists' union, the BBK, which in recent years has been very critical about cultural policy, called the exhibition "snobbish" and the expenditure of slightly more than £100,000 unjustified, Pieter Engels' work in the exhibition, a full-page illustrated text in the weekly *Vrij Nederland*, parodied such opposition:

> *WASTE OR TASTE EVENT (SHORT SERIES OF EVENTS ON TASTE OR WASTE) THE SPENDING OF A REMUNERATION BY PIETER ENGELS TO BE RECEIVED FROM THE FOUNDATION "SONSBEEK BEYOND LAWN AND ORDER 1971" FOR A (THIS) CONTRIBUTION TO THE MANIFESTATION OF MODERN ART "SONSBEEK BEYOND LAWN AND ORDER 1971" (PICTURE I) ENGELS AT HOME WITH HIS BLACK-AND-WHITE TV. FOR SOME TIME ENGELS HAS BEEN THINKING OF EXCHANGING THIS SET FOR A PHILIPS COLOR TV. AT THE SAME TIME ENGELS CONTEMPLATES SPENDING HIS REMUNERATION FOR HIS (THIS) CONTRIBUTION TO "SONSBEEK BEYOND LAWN AND ORDER 1971" ON THE PURCHASE OF A PHILIPS COLOR TV. [...]*

10

EXHIBITION

Documenta 5

LOCATION

Neue Galerie, Museum Fridericianum, and Kino Royal, Kassel

DATE

30 June–8 October 1972

CURATORS

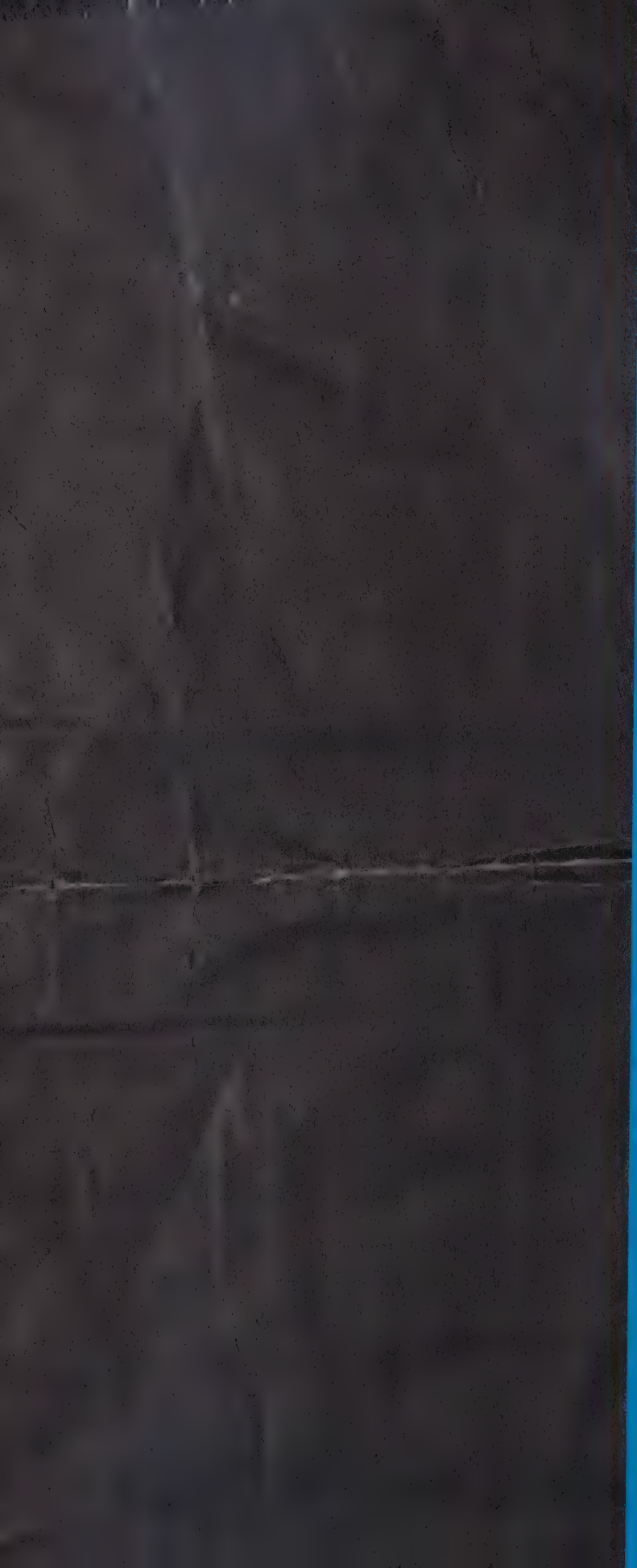
Harald Szeemann (General Secretary), Jean Christophe Ammann, and Bazon Brock

ITINERARY

None

ARTISTS

Vito Acconci, Vincenzo Agnetti, Peter Alexander, John De Andrea, Giovanni Anselmo, Arbeitszeit, Archigram, Chuck Arnold, Art & Language, Richard Artschwager, Michael Ashkin, John Baldessari, Robert Barry, Georg Baselitz, Lothar Baumgarten, Bernd und Hilla Becher, Robert Bechtle,



Gottfried Bechtold, Joseph Beuys, Karl Oskar Blase, Mel Bochner, Alighiero Boetti, Christian Boltanski, Claudio Bravo, George Brecht, K. P. Brehmer, Marcel Broodthaers, Stanley Brouwn, Günter Brus, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Michael Buthe, James Lee Byars, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Luciano Castelli, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Chuck Close, Tony Conrad, Ron Cooper, Bill Copley, Joseph Cornell, Robert Cottingham, Paul Cotton, Hanne Darboven, Walter De Maria, David Deutsch, Jan Dibbets, Herbert Distel, Gino de Dominicis, Marcel Duchamp, John Dugger, Dan Eddy, Franz Eggenschwiler, Ger van Elk, Richard Estes, Luciano Fabro, John C. Ferrin, Robert Filliou, Jiri Fira, Joel Fisher, Terry Fox, Howard Fried, Hamish Fulton, Franz Gertsch, Gilbert and George, Ralph Gorngs, Hubert Gojowczyk, Dan Graham, Walter Grasskamp, Nancy Graves, Hans Haacke, Duane Hanson, Guy Harloff, Michael Harvey, Haus Rucker-Co, Auguste Herbin, Eva Hesse, Rebecca Horn, Jean Olivier Hucleux, Douglas Huebler, Jörg Immendorff, Will Insley, Rolf Iseli, Ken Jacobs, Neil Jenney, Alfred Jensen, Jasper Johns, Joan Jonas, Max G. Kaminski, Howard Kanovitz, Edward Kienholz, Imi Knoebel, Christof Kohlhofer, Jannis Kounellis, Tom Kovacherich, Piotr Kowalski, David Lamelas, Barry Le Va, Jean LeGac, Alfred Leslie, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Ingeborg Lüscher, Inge Mahn, Robert Mangold, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Etienne Martin, Richard Mclean, David Medalla, Fernando Melani, Jim Melchert, Maria Merz, Gustav Metzger, Bernd Minnich, Malcolm Morley, Ed Moses, Bruce Nauman, Hermann Nitsch, Claes Oldenburg, Yoko Ono, Dennis Oppenheim, Blinky Palermo, Panamarenko, Giulio Paolini, A.R. Penck, Giuseppe Penone, Victor Pisani, Sigmar Polke, Stephen Posen, Markus Raetz, Arnulf Rainer, Gerhard Richter, Klaus Rinke, Dorothea Rockburne, Peter Roehr, Ulrich Ruckriem, Allen Ruppersberg, Edward Ruscha, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Robert Ryman, John Salt, Salvo, Lucas Samaras, Paul Sarkisian, Jean-Frederic Schnyder, Ben Schonzeit, Werner Schroeter, H.A. Schult, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Fritz Schwegler, Richard Serra, Paul Sharits, Allan Shields, Katharina Sieverding, Robert Smithson, Michael Snow, Keith Sonnier, Klaus Staeck, Paul Staiger, Jorge Stever, Robert Strubin, Paul Thek, Wayne Thiebaud, Andre Thomkins, David Tremlett, Richard Tuttle, Ben Vautier, W = B Hein, Franz Erhard Walther, Robert Watts, William Wegman, Lawrence Weiner, John Wesley, H.C. Westermann, William Wiley, Rolf Winnewisser, Tom Wudl, Klaus Wyborny, La Monte Young, Peter Young, Gilberto Zorio

EXHIBITION CATALOG

Documenta 5, with texts by Harald Szeemann, Arnold Bode, Hans Heinz Holz, etc., Munich: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1972

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 218

Number of works: 820

Total attendance: 228,621

The most important curatorial development of the post-war period was the thematic exhibition, and Documenta 5 established the paradigm. In response to a contemporary art explosion of perplexing form and variety, exhibition-makers sought not only to introduce the new but to provide interpretive concepts for its understanding. At Documenta 5, Harald Szeemann and his curatorial team accomplished this through a conceptual construct that used artworks and non-art objects to investigate the relationship between images and reality.

Created in 1955, Documenta rejected the structure of national representation adopted by other recurring international exhibitions. Instead, a council under the leadership of founder Arnold Bode selected the works. But difficulties of group decision-making and criticism of the 1968 show led to the appointment of Harald Szeemann as General Secretary with overall responsibility for Documenta 5. In collaboration with aesthetics professor Bazon Brock and museum director Jean-Christophe Ammann, he changed the idea of the exhibition from Bode's "100-day museum" to that of a "100-day event." In line with his interest in process and performance, Szeemann first envisioned a tent structure where artists would work and perform on site. But the unpredictability of such a situation became clear during his 1970 "Happening & Fluxus" exhibition in Cologne.

Szeemann and his curatorial team then developed a more traditional exhibition plan, to be mounted inside the Neue Galerie and Museum Friedericianum. There still was much performance, from Joseph Beuys lecturing at his "Office for Direct Democracy" to Gilbert and George wandering around as "living sculptures." But most of the exhibition consisted of artist-by-artist displays in the galleries. The general theoretical framework was formulated by Bazon Brock, with Szeemann, Ammann, and hired specialists selecting works to be shown under different categories. In addition to contemporary art, there was kitsch, advertising, political propaganda, utopian architecture, and science-fiction imagery. But a pornography section was canceled, and Szeemann's requests were denied for works of Socialist Realism from the Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc, and China. Many pieces were displayed under such typical categories as Realism, Ideas, and Process, and throughout the show Szeemann marked his commitment to the personal creative vision by placing works under the heading of "Individual Mythology." Despite this, Documenta 5 was criticized for viewing art as a matter of sociology and politics.

A fundamental tension in the exhibition was between the analytic perspective of Brock's thematic structure and Szeemann's emphasis on the imagination of the artist. This dynamic between objective analysis and subjective expression was played out in the foyer of the Neue Galerie. Here Szeemann positioned five museums created by artists, works suggesting that this paradigmatic institution of cultural knowledge is at root personal and subjective; he insinuated the same thing about the analytic framework of Documenta 5. His respect for the individuality of the artist did not protect him from artist disapproval. Daniel Buren saw the show as "an exhibition of an exhibition," with the curator as artist. Szeemann included Buren's essay in the catalog, as he did Robert Smithson's disparagement of museums. Smithson was one of ten American artists who signed a letter in *Artforum* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that asserted artists' right to control the exhibiting of their work. *Flash Art* published Robert Morris's letter refusing to have his art illustrate theories. Most angry was Lucy Lippard, who criticized Szeemann's treatment of women artists.

After the intensity of three years' work on the show and threatened with personal liability for significant budget overruns, Szeemann returned to Switzerland. His next exhibition would be about his grandfather and was held in his own apartment. Continuing to use in highly personal ways the thematic exhibition form pioneered in Kassel, he called his enterprise the "Museum of Obsessions."

May 6, 1972

Giancarlo Politi
Flash Art
Milano

Dear Giancarlo Politi:

Regarding Documenta V, I submit the following:

I do not wish to have my work used to illustrate misguided sociological principles or outmoded art historical categories. I do not wish to participate in international exhibitions which do not consult with me as to what work I might want to show but instead dictate to me what will be shown. I do not wish to be associated with an exhibition which refuses to communicate with me after I have indicated my desire to present work other than that which has been designated. Finally, I condemn the showing of work of mine which has been borrowed from collectors without my having been advised.

Signed,

R. Morris

While the above is a presonal statement, it is of less importance than the group statement which follows. This statement has been wired to Harald Szeemann:

The undersigned affirm the following points, propmted primarily in response to Documenta V, but pertaining to all exhibition conditions.
(1) It is the right of an artist to determine whether his art will be exhibited. It is the right of an artist to determine what and where he exhibits.
(2) A work of art should not be exhibited in a classification without the artist's consent.
(3) An artist must have the right to do what he wants without censorship in the space allotted in the catalogue.
(4) A complete, itemized budget of all institutional exhibitions - including allocations to participants, transportation, curatorial fees, etc. - should be made public immediately after the exhibition.

Carl Andre
Hans Haacke
Dan Judd
Sol LeWitt
Barry Barry Le Va
Robert Morris
Dorothea Rockburne
Fred Sandback
Richard Serra
Robert Smithson

↑ Exhibition catalog for Documenta 5, with cover showing ants arranged in the number "5," designed by Ed Ruscha.

↗ Press conference for Documenta 5, with (left to right) Arnold Bode, Sigurd Hermes, Jean-Christoph Ammann, Hans Heinz Holz, Harald Szeemann, and Klaus Ulrich Reinke.

→ Letter from Robert Morris published in *Flash Art* (May–June 1972), protesting against the curating of Documenta 5.

↗↗ Advertisement placed in *Artforum*, June 1972, condemning Documenta 5, signed by Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Barry Le Va, Robert Morris, Dorothea Rockburne, Fred Sandback, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson. Ultimately, Haacke, LeWitt, Le Va, Rockburn, and Serra did exhibit works at the exhibition, but Smithson's only contribution was his "Cultural Confinement" essay published in the exhibition's catalog; Andre, Judd, Morris, and Sandback withdrew from the exhibition altogether.

↗↗↗ Neue Gallerie, "Social Iconography" section, showing non-art posters.

→ Neue Galerie, "Social Iconography" section, showing forty Spiegel covers dating from 1960 to 1972.

THE UNDERSIGNED AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING POINTS, PROMPTED PRIMARILY IN RESPONSE TO DOCUMENTA V, BUT PERTAINING TO ALL EXHIBITION CONDITIONS.

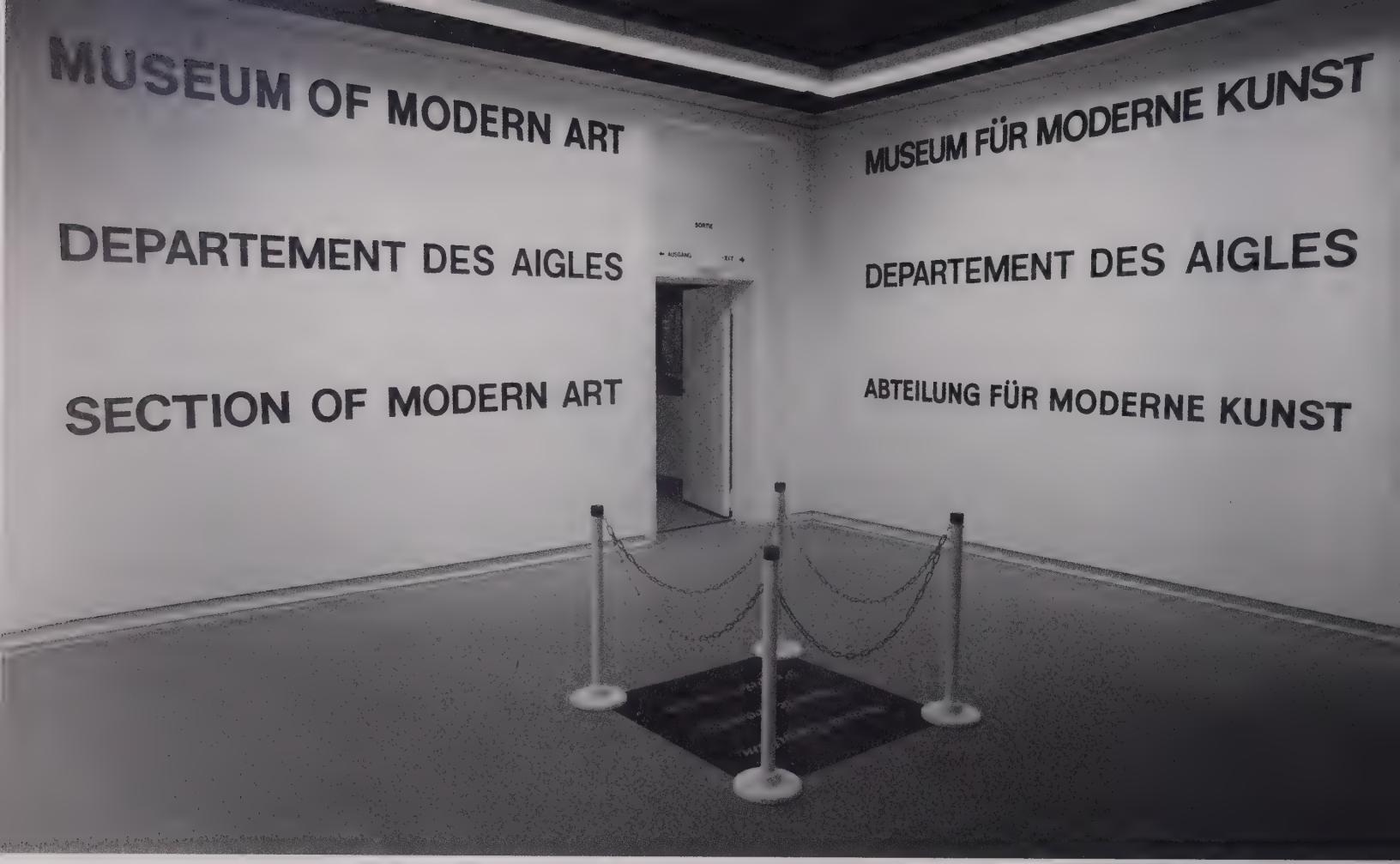
1. IT IS THE RIGHT OF AN ARTIST TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS ART WILL BE EXHIBITED. IT IS THE RIGHT OF AN ARTIST TO DETERMINE WHAT AND WHERE HE EXHIBITS.

2. A WORK OF ART SHOULD NOT BE EXHIBITED IN A CLASSIFICATION WITHOUT THE ARTIST'S CONSENT.

3. AN ARTIST MUST HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO WHAT HE WANTS WITHOUT CENSORSHIP IN THE SPACE ALLOTTED IN THE CATALOGUE.

4. A COMPLETE, ITEMIZED BUDGET OF ALL INSTITUTIONAL EXHIBITIONS — INCLUDING ALLOCATIONS TO PARTICIPANTS, TRANSPORTATION, CURATORIAL FEES, ETC. —SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EXHIBITION.

Carl Andre	Robert Morris
Hans Haacke	Dorothea Rockburne
Don Judd	Fred Sandback
Sol LeWitt	Richard Serra
Barry Le Va	Robert Smithson

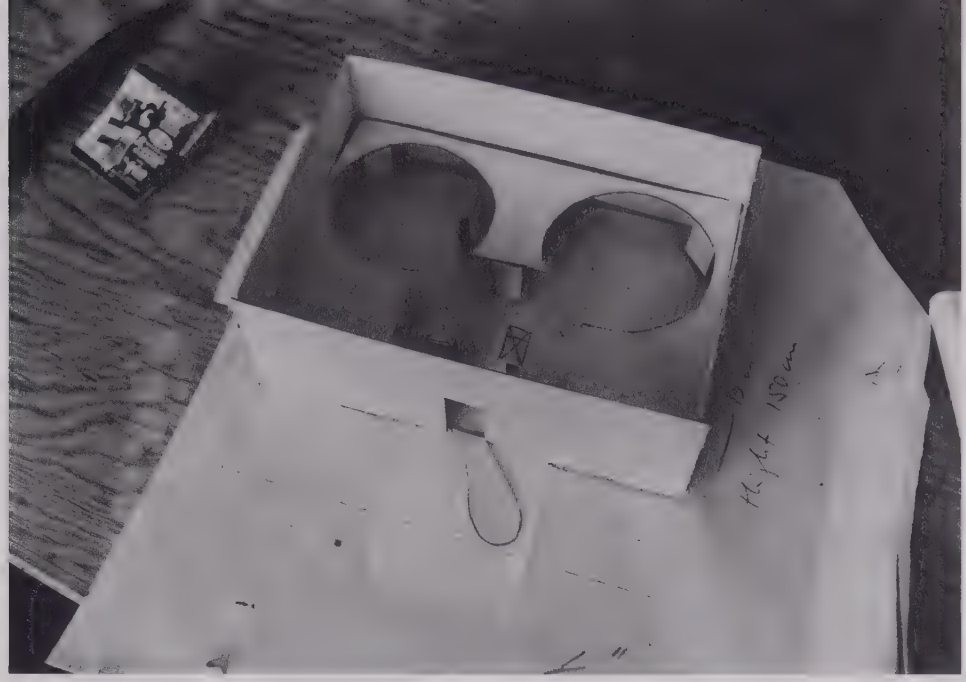

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES
SECTION OF MODERN ART
MUSEUM FÜR MODERNE KUNST
DEPARTEMENT DES AIGLES
ABTEILUNG FÜR MODERNE KUNST
SORTIE
← AUSGANG
EXIT →

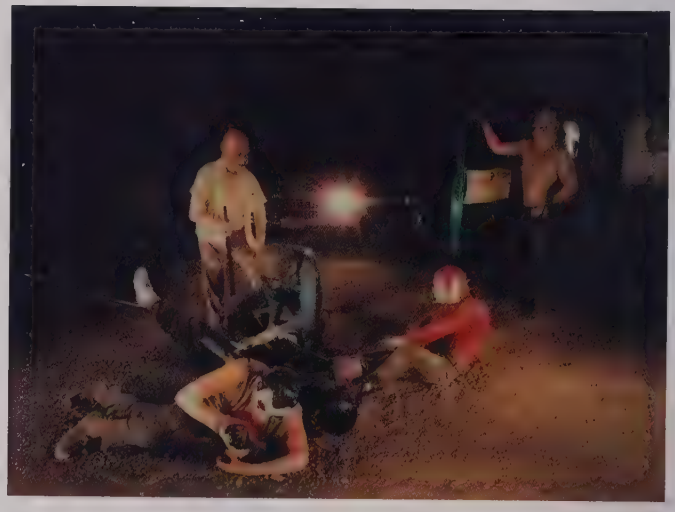
← Installed on the second floor of the Neue Galerie, Marcel Broodthaers's *Musée d'Art Modern, Department des Aigles, Section d'Art Modern* was part of a fictitious museum invented by the artist in 1968. Broodthaers presented another installation of his Museum (Section Publicité) on the ground floor as part of the "Artists' Museums" section, which also included Marcel Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* and Claes Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum*.

↙ Neue Galerie, "Artist's Museums" section. Marcel Broodthaers during the construction of his exhibition.

→ Claes Oldenburg's model for *Mouse Museum*.

↓ Neue Galerie, "Artists' Museums" section, view inside Claes Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum*.





← Neue Galerie, "Individual Mythologies" section, showing Paul Thek's *Ark, Pyramid* installation, which was developed from another work shown at Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1971.

↙↙ Neue Galerie, "Realism" section, showing Chuck Close's photorealistic painting *John*.

↙ Edward Kienholz's *Five Car Stud*, a tableau showing the castration of a black man by a group of white assailants. The work was presented outside, in an inflatable dome structure.

→ Neue Galerie, "Realism" section, showing *Seated Artist* by Duane Hanson.

↘ Neue Galerie, "Realism" section, showing *Arden Anderson and Nora Murphy* by John de Andrea.

↘↘ Neue Galerie, "Realism" section. Works by Robert Bechtle and Ralph Goings.

↑ Paul Cotton performing outside the Museum Fridericianum.

↗ Austrian experimental design group Haus-Rucker-Co attached their PVC bubble, *Oasis No. 7*, to the facade of the Museum Fridericianum.

→ James Lee Byars performing in front of the Museum Fridericianum, with Haus-Rucker-Co's *Oasis No. 7* in the background. Byars's performance, *Calling German Names*, involved the artist standing at the apex of the Fridericianum's grand portico while calling out a list of German first names through a gold-colored loudspeaker.

↑ Installed on top of the Museum Fridericianum was a banner with the words "Art is Superfluous" in German, a motif picked up by numerous reviewers of the exhibition as evidence of Documenta 5's disregard for art. In fact, it was an artwork by Fluxus artist Ben Vautier, titled *Écriture (Kunst ist überflüssig)*.

← Outside the Museum Fridericianum, H. A. Schult's *Biokinetic Landscape*.

↑ The "Audiovisual Preface" ("Audiovisuelles Vorwort") at the Museum Fridericianum. The "Preface" was part of Bazon Brock's "school for visitors," which, along with the catalog, gave a theoretical framework for Documenta 5.

↗ Museum Fridericianum, "Individual Mythologies" section. Joseph Beuys and the young artist David Abraham Christian take part in a boxing bout, with artist Anatol as referee. In the background are posters by Ben Vautier.

→ Museum Fridericianum, "Individual Mythologies" section, showing Joseph Beuys at his Office for Direct Democracy through Referenda.

→ Fluxus artist Ben Vautier, in the section "Individual Mythologies: Self-expression, Performances, Activities, Changes."

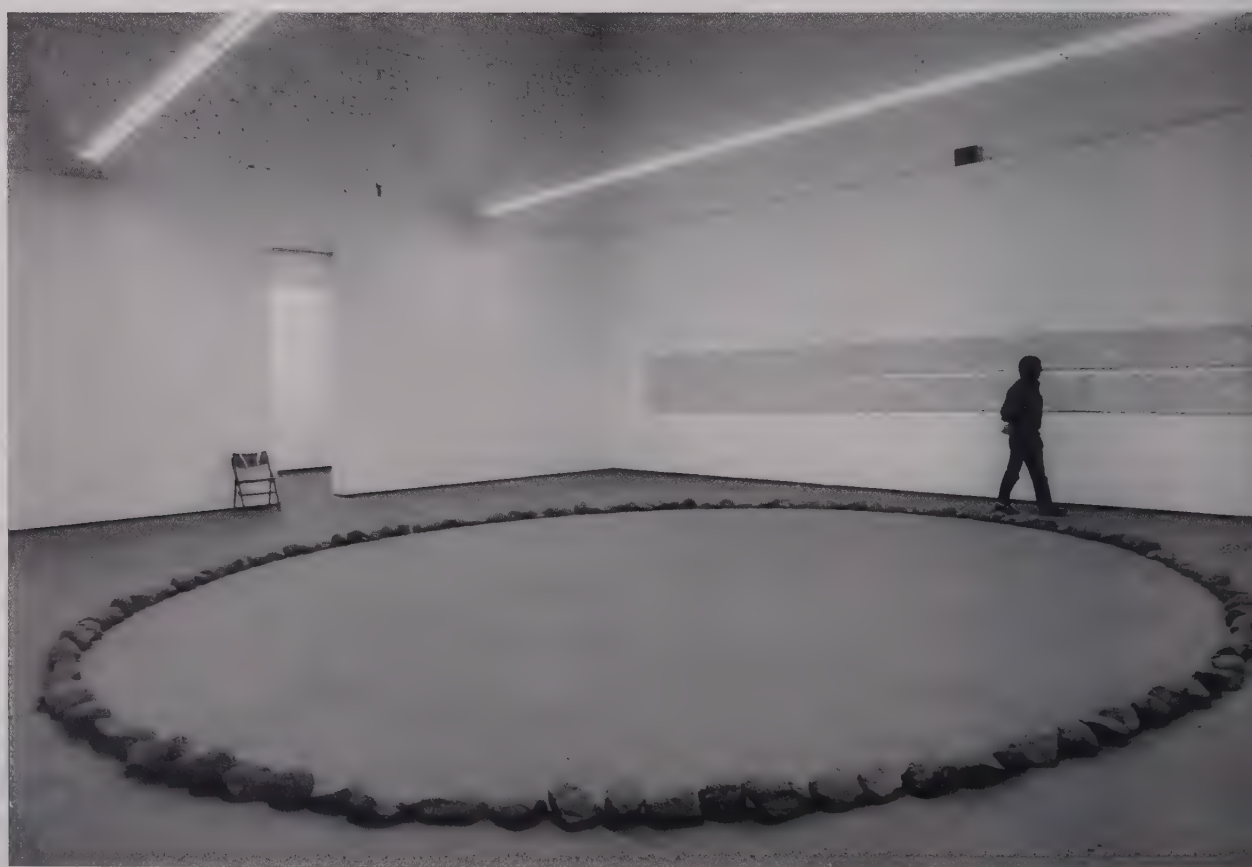
↓ Panamarenko's giant *Aeromodeller* was shown in the "Processes" section at the Museum Fridericianum; he had made the work for the exhibition "Sonsbeek 71," the year before (see p. 148).

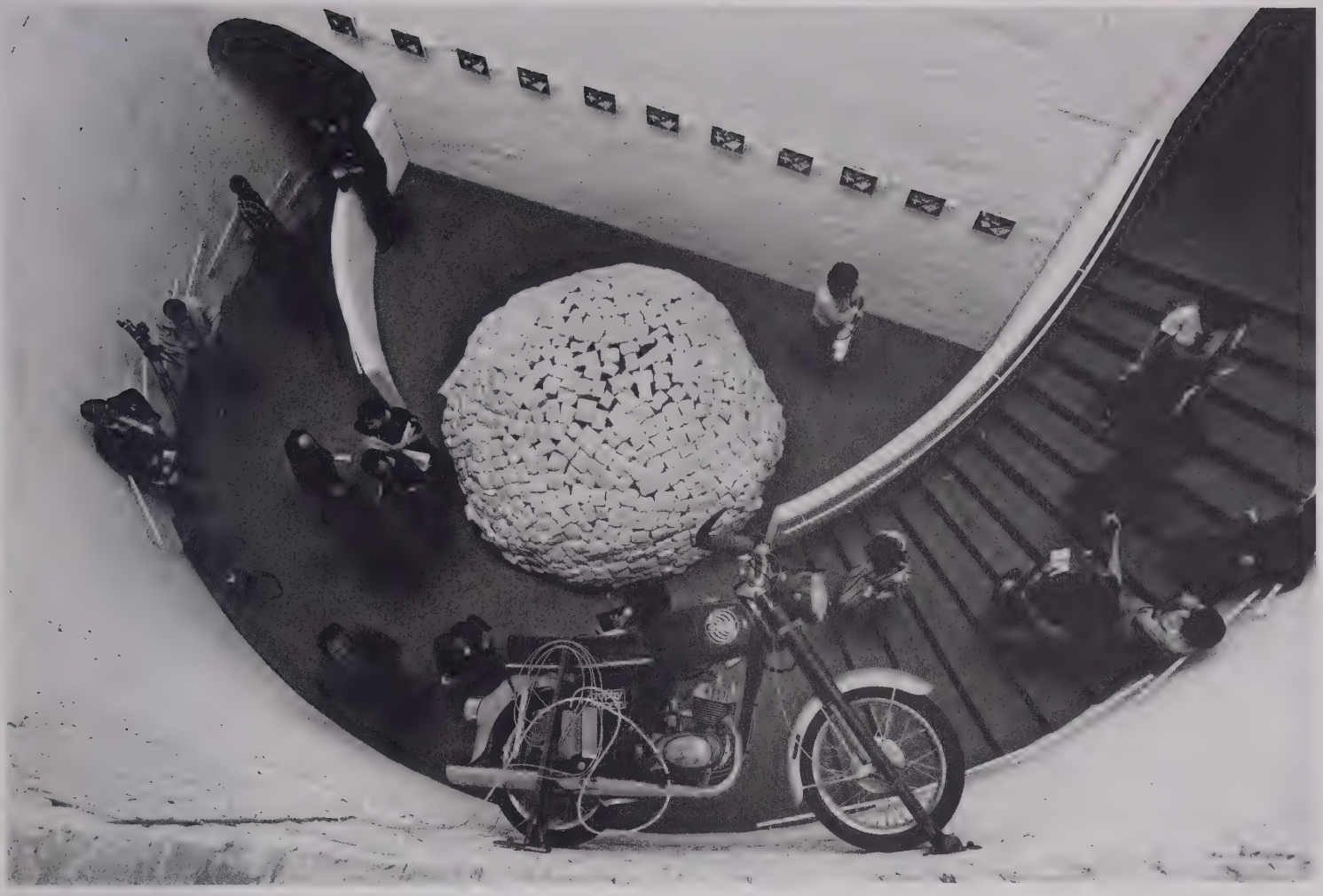
← Museum Fridericianum, "Idea" section, with works by Bruce Nauman, Barry Le Va, and Reiner Ruthenbeck.

↙ On the upstairs floor of the Museum Fridericianum, Richard Long's work in front, and Hanne Darboven's on the wall behind.

→ Museum Fridericianum, "Individual Mythologies: Processes" section. Mario Merz's *Acceleration=Dream, Fibonacci Numbers in Neon and Motorcycle Phantom*.

↘ In the attic rooms of the Museum Fridericianum, La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela's *Dream House* was an enveloping environment in which performances by the Theatre of Eternal Music took place.





WHAT IS REALITY? THE THEME OF DOCUMENTA 5

Georg Jappe

Studio International, 1 July 1971

The fifth Documenta exhibition takes place in Kassel from 2 June to 8 October 1972. Its Secretary-General, Harald Szeemann, a believer in "replacing ownership by free actions," announced a year ago that its title was to be "The Hundred-Day Event." Since then, his "Happening" exhibition in Cologne last autumn has taught him that this would make him entirely dependent on the caprice, not to say the willful eccentricity, of participants mostly more interested in advertising themselves than in enlightening anyone else. As a result, a new theme for Documenta 5 has just been agreed; its aim is nothing less than the redefinition of the understanding of art. Without invalidating the immanent formal laws governing a work of art, the hotly discussed issue of value is placed firmly in context by the question "How does this work relate to reality?"

For the first time, Documenta is not a judgment day, establishing world ratings, but a value-free, thematic exhibition. The theme is formulated thus: "Questioning Reality—Image Worlds Today." It is divided into three large categories: 1.) "Reality of Representation," 2.) "Reality of the Thing Represented," and 3.) "Identity or Non-Identity of Representation and Thing Represented." This all sounds rather like half-baked philosophy; and the theoretical background paper by Bazon Brock is written in an esoteric jargon which sounds partly like a stock parody of professorial German, partly like a highly formalized autonomous work of art which set out to hold art obscurely, vaguely but lastingly on the path of content.

The resulting fears among members of the international art world that Documenta 5 is some kind of theory-crazed rampage against the established Artist-Exhibitor-Collector-Public setup, were allayed at the first press conference in the course of nearly four hours of televised factual exposition and argument. The members of "Documenta Team 5," Jean-Christophe Amann, Arnold Bode, and Harald Szeemann (thematic exhibition), Bazon Brock (theory, "Visitors' School"), Karlheinz Braun and Peter Iden (Theater, "Experimenta"), and Ulrich Gregor, Alexander Kluge, and Edgar Reitz (film), produced an additional working paper in which the individual categories were embodied in concrete, if provisional, lists of names.

The first category, "Reality of Representation," covers fictive reality: socialist realism, advertising, kitsch, comics, propaganda, the "iconography of society" from flags to postage stamps and bank notes, and the popular art of monuments and tombstones. "Reality of the Thing Represented" is a category that gives plenty of scope to the new American naturalists; they share it with Gnoli, Klapheck, and the Pop artists, who may not be overjoyed at the prospect. The theme is extended to cover portraiture (Andy Warhol and the reactionary Paul Mathias Padua), "Individual Mythologies" (Beuys, Nauman, Nitsch), and anonymous fields, such as Black Power activism, pornography, and drug experiments.

In the third group, "Identity or Non-Identity of Representation and Thing Represented," Process art, Conceptual art, transformation (e.g. Oldenburg), transposition (e.g. Magritte); "real-time" film (e.g. Warhol and Gerry Schum's television gallery), and the art-life equation, are seen in the context of "forced identity" (the art of children, mental patients, and naive painters) and "wish-fulfilling identity" (sport and play). The examples of "self-presentation" should be particularly interesting; they are expected to include not only artists such as Gilbert and George but also art impresarios such as Konrad Fischer, Pierre Restany, and Peter Ludwig.

Thus, art is placed in a context, but not forced into it. Two points were emphasized repeatedly at the press conference: any work of art that lays claim to autonomy will be shown on its own (the compartmented structure of the new Schone Aussicht building makes this possible); and Documenta 5 is not to be an illustrated seminar, but a true exhibition that can be experienced in visual terms.

PREFACE

Harald Szeemann

Documenta 5 (exh. cat.), 1972

When we began planning d5, the art world was enjoying a triumphant period driven by the speculator fever of art dealers with their leading stars, yet also by increasingly sharp doubts about the art market. During the two years of preparation, two radically different programs were sketched out. One was orientated toward artists, the other toward visitors. But neither was totally applicable in its pure form. An event-orientated documenta would, at worst, have abandoned the institution to the street and arbitrariness, whereas a seminar-type approach would have turned its back on the original[ity of the] event. Hence, the documenta presented here is, as so often, halfway between the two, which has meant as with the realization of all ideas, "getting our hands dirty." This d5 has the fertile, active character of an art show yet also offers signposts to new ways of seeing in a form that, postulated as the conceptual interrogation of reality, can be perceived in current examples of art and non-art. The presentation of works is autonomous, as formally decided by the artist. The role of the beholder or visitor, therefore, resides in differentiating the levels of reality in the work, something with which the artist is not concerned. His knowledge and analysis or discussion of the work may, on their own, have an impact that transforms the defined structures of realities, the determination or definition of various levels of reality within the work. This deliberate, desired incorporation of event-driven interpretation can only be effectuated by beholders on condition that they take d5 and the works on show as representing images in the world. The misconception which assumes that this idea represents a way of valorizing non-artistry should be dismissed. The idea represents a differentiated "way of seeing," whose goal is the elimination of simple "yes" and "no" judgments.

This way of "seeing" does not go without saying, but is driven by current artistic output. Much of the contemporary paint-

ing phenomenon is willfully banal and inexpressive, presented as the abbreviation of a process—the suggestion, impulse, or first link in an iconological chain. In *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955), Erwin Panofsky started with the example of an encounter with an acquaintance, who politely lifted his hat, then successively teased out the various signifying levels of this event and simultaneously underscored, thanks to numerous examples, each of the various levels of reality within a conventional act, ranging from the mere habit to fully significant gesture.

Given the nature of a documenta that broadly presents the first information concerning artistic trends of the past three years, it would be absolutely mistaken to once again encumber "seeing" with a value judgment as, for example, Sedlmayer did in his structural analysis of Brueghel's *Blind Leading the Blind*, when he claimed that with progressive signifying levels the beauty and value of the painting can only be enhanced.

It is true that the art of the 1970s will move toward greater significance. The innovative boom years, during which new pictorial ideas and materials were placed on an equal footing and promoted as new adventures, seem to be over. That is why this documenta was able to reject the phoney freedom of a "museum in the street" and to restrict the exhibition to two buildings, the Neue Galerie and the Museum Fridericianum. (Artists of the 1970s have practically abandoned the competitive debate with extra-artistic buildings. Traces are left in nature only where nature is virgin, and then only as counter-proof stemming from output.) But this limitation to indoor space is no longer to be understood as a protective aid to works on the assumption that, as Hoffmann put it two years ago "art, to be seen as such, needs a museum context."

An artist's relationship to museums once again goes without saying, and there is a suggestion that as soon as we manage to free museums from the dreadful reputation as places of consecration, they will become what they once were, thanks to the artworks themselves.

As a panoramic exhibition, d5 brings together the three magisterial forms of exhibition activity: criticism, information, documentation. Parallel pictorial methods—how they emerged and how they work—provide access to the problematic of the creation, evolution and differentiation of levels of reality; Conceptual art and Hyperrealism to provide access to trends based on a formal perspective; individual mythologies provide access to the subjective creation of myths, sustaining a claim of overall validity via pictorial formulation. This term was used in 1963 in relation to the "internal" plans through which Etienne-Martin explained and defined the large sculptures of his empirical universe as "personal mythologies." d5 simultaneously offers information about art, paths towards art, and, we hope, the prospect of a post-art-market dawn.

I would like to thank all of you who have participated in the completion and success of d5: artists, volunteers, colleagues, lenders, secretarial staff, technical team, catalog crew, the authorities, security staff, and administrators. I hope that the principle of asking a single person to take charge of documenta—even though he knew it can't be done alone—has been shown to work, and that this principle will be further explored on other, local occasions, especially in situations where the task is to convey the combination of production-reception that d5 has sought to stimulate and activate.

CULTURAL CONFINEMENT

Robert Smithson

Documenta 5 (exh. cat.), 1972

Cultural confinement takes place when a curator imposes his own limits on an art exhibition, rather than asking an artist to set his limits. Artists are expected to fit into fraudulent categories. Some artists imagine they've got a hold on this apparatus, which in fact has got a hold of them. As a result, they end up supporting a cultural prison that is out of their control. Artists themselves are not confined, but their output is. Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells—in other words, neutral rooms called "galleries." A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world. A vacant white room with lights is still a submission to the neutral. Works of art seen in such spaces seem to be going through a kind of esthetic convalescence. They are looked upon as so many inanimate invalids, waiting for critics to pronounce them curable or incurable. The function of the warden-curator is to separate art from the rest of society. Next comes integration. Once the work of art is totally neutralized, ineffective, abstracted, safe, and politically lobotomized, it is ready to be consumed by society. All is reduced to visual fodder and transportable merchandise. Innovations are allowed only if they support this kind of confinement. [...]

Could it be that certain art exhibitions have become metaphysical junkyards? Categorical miasmas? Intellectual rubbish? Specific intervals of visual desolation? The warden-curators still depend on the wreckage of metaphysical principles and structures because they don't know anybetter. The wasted remains of ontology, cosmology, and epistemology still offer a ground for art. Although metaphysics is outmoded and blighted, it is presented as tough principles and solid reasons for installations of art. The museums and parks are graveyards above the ground—congealed memories of the past that act as a pretext for reality. This causes acute anxiety among artists, in so far as they challenge, compete, and fight for the spoiled ideals of lost situations.

EXHIBITION OF AN EXHIBITION

Daniel Buren

Documenta 5 (exh. cat.), 1972

More and more, the subject of an exhibition tends not be the display of artworks, but the exhibition of the exhibition as a work of art. Here, the Documenta team, headed by Harald Szeemann, exhibits (artworks) and exposes itself (to critiques).

The works presented are carefully chosen touches of color in the tableau that composes each section as a whole.

There is even an order to these colors, these being defined and arranged according to the drawn design of the selection in which they are presented.

These sections or castrations—themselves carefully chosen "touches of color" in the tableau that makes up the exhibition as a whole and in its very principle—only appear by placing themselves under the wing of the organizer, who reunifies art by rendering it equivalent everywhere in the case that he prepares for it.

The organizer assumes the contradictions; it is he who safeguards them.

It is true, then, that the exhibition establishes itself as its own subject, and its own subject as a work of art. The exhibition is the "valorizing receptacle" in which art is played out and founders, because even if the artwork was formerly revealed thanks to the museum, it now serves as nothing more than a decorative gimmick for the survival of the museum as tableau, a tableau whose author is none other than the exhibition organizer.

And the artist throws her- or himself and her or his work into this trap, because the artist and her or his work, which are powerless from the force of habit of art, have no choice but to allow another to be exhibited: the organizer.

Hence, the exhibition as a tableau of art, as the limit of the exhibition of art. Thus, the limits art has created for itself, as shelter, turn against it by imitating it, and the refuge that the limits of art had constituted are revealed as its justification, reality, and tomb.

DOCUMENTA 5

Eduard Beaucamp

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3 July 1972

For the first time this 5th Documenta renounces almost any outside: the park landscapes in the Kassel riverside meadows as well as the neighboring city area, in short: any kind of environment. Even Panamarenko's stranded airship insists on its fragile imaginary greatness in one of the impressive halls in the Fridericianum. The Vienna project group of Hausrucker Co. hung their environmentally harmful air bubble with its gentle vision of palms and hammocks out of the window. We note a retreat into the museum. The dream seems to be already over: the dream of expanding and changing the environment through the arts, of a mutual penetration between art and life in an effectively social and urban sense. "Environment" was a slogan at the Documenta 4. The spatial arrangements this time, although no less numerous, achieve their impact no longer through expansion and a demand for public recognition. They are spatial fantasies, spatial gestures and projections, shells and landscapes full of speculative imagination and psychology. It is significant that interior spaces, spatial encapsulations, snail shells with curious accumulations, refuges, and dream-areas dominate. On the other hand, the concepts and experiences documented are so boundless and ephemeral that they pervade space and time and almost dissolve into arbitrariness. The Belgian Broodthaers declared his room the "Museum of the 20th century" and sectioned off one part with a sign reading "Private property," a pointed gesture signaling a claim for the private and untouchable status of the work of art.

Text published in translation in Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeyer (eds.), Harald Szeemann: with by through because towards despite, Zurich: Edition Voldemeer Zürich, 2007.

DOCUMENT OF AN AGE

Barbara Rose

New York Magazine, 14 August 1972

Kunst ist überflussig—"Art is superfluous"—is the motto of the most important exhibition of the esthetics of the 1970s. Now attracting droves of cognoscenti to the remote West German town of Kassel, Documenta 5, fifth in a series of international art fairs held in Kassel museums every four years, has replaced the moribund Venice Biennale as the focus for the summer art shenanigans. Perhaps the most striking feature of this year's Documenta is that it has almost nothing to do with works of art. Taking the exhibition's title literally, Harald Szeemann, the brilliant Swiss curator who organized the show, chose to ignore painting and sculpture almost entirely to produce a documentary survey of the current status of art as social activity.

By so doing, Szeemann has become the greatest Conceptual artist in the world, assimilating the activities of what purports to be today's avant-garde to his own ends. He and his associates have created the only great work of art in the show, a monstrous super-document, the Documenta catalog in which every strategy and ploy of the contemporary artist to remain outside of society and critical of its institutions is proved useless, as these activities are categorized, indexed, and integrated into the existing social structure and its cultural institutions. [...]

THE ART WORLD. ENQUIRY '72: ON THE EDGE

Harold Rosenberg

The New Yorker, 9 September 1972

In Kassel, two million dollars has been spent (in this period of reduced budgets!) on an exhibition investigating a word: "art"; Documenta 5, the triumphant German rival of the Venice Biennale, has followed the avant-garde tradition of ascertaining how far the concept of art can be stretched. From Matisse to Pollock and from Cubism to earthworks, artists have brought forth the outcry that "this time they have gone too far." At Documenta 5, the crossing of boundaries has been carried out by a team of curators and art historians instead of by artists—a significant takeover, in that a curator is likely to lack the imaginative and emotional limits of an artist and may go as far as reason will allow. The exhibition in Kassel is undoubtedly the farthest reconnaissance into territory where art has lost its definition, or is prepared to share it with things never before thought of as art. The theme of the show is "Inquiry Into Reality—Today's Imagery," and with this project in mind all aesthetic standards have

been discarded (as clues to reality, images that possess quality, and those that lack it are equally significant). Today's imagery includes, together with what is conventionally accepted as art, anything offered to the eye, from a Woolworth valentine to the printed wisdom of a conceptualist. This loosening of the notion of what is worth looking at brings a landslide of visual fact into the area once reserved for painting and sculpture. We are made aware that image-making includes news photographs, films, posters, constructions, blueprints, postage stamps, bank notes, costumes, performances, tableaux, comic strips, caricatures, dolls, chessmen, insignia, flags, children's drawings, mantelpiece figurines, armbands, buttons, rubber stamps, garden sculpture, advertisements, emblems, labels, religious chromos, forms produced by wind and fire. In Documenta 5, individual creations have been made subsidiary to the picture world (Bilderwelt) as a whole. This is another way of saying that categories of visual experience have replaced art criticism. Harald Szeemann, director of the exhibition, and Jean-Christophe Ammann, his associate, must have stopped adding items only because they ran out of space or cash. Should the objection be made that some of the exhibits are not art in any sense, Documenta has anticipated it with a huge banner flaunted across the portico of the Fridericianum Museum, the larger of the two buildings in which most of the exhibition is housed; it announces that "Art Is Superfluous" ("Kunst Ist Überflüssig").

As a campsite of the far out, Documenta 5 is an important stocktaking of international avant-gardism as it exists in 1972, in both theory and production. The exposure of what has happened to the tradition of the new is striking. Not only has the notion of creation disintegrated into "perception" and "information" but the capacity of art forms to devise new aesthetic modes from earlier ones has petered out. The most significant feature of Documenta 5 is that in it art is directionless: it evokes no past (except in the sense of repetition) and points to no future. Art history has been abandoned; the exhibition simply reflects a global mass of opinions and phenomena. According to Dr. Ammann, the planners of Documenta 5 began with the observation that, in contrast to the years of the first four Documentas (the series was inaugurated in 1955), in the 1970s no art movement is dominant and all postwar styles enjoy equal prestige. Since art is no longer forging "ahead," it was decided to replace art as an independent realm of activity with selections of imagery classified in terms of the "ideologies" reflected in it. Presumably, the spectator was to become aware that advertisements for cola drinks and the body movements of a blindfolded performer constitute "an interrelated structure of social realities."

The effect of this program was to give the theories of the organizers of Documenta precedence over the works on display; in the language of one of Documenta's numerous documents, "an abstract grating of ideas is placed before physical observation." The primary substance to be apprehended in this "inquiry into reality" is hypotheses and conclusions. The close formal scrutiny of paintings practiced by art criticism in the 1960s has been rendered obsolete by exhibits that need be looked at only long enough to grasp the sociological reason they are there. Art, non-art, and sub-art can be pushed into the same pigeon holes. Some American artists felt that this was a demotion and resented it; Robert Morris, it is reported, withdrew from the exhibition with the complaint that he did not "wish to have my work used to illustrate misguided sociological principles." However, his objection to having an ideology imposed on his art by the context in which it is exhibited arrives a bit late. Since the last war, it has become increasingly usual for directors of exhibitions to use works of art as tags for their "themes"—technical, aesthetic, and/or historical. For example, in 1969 Morris participated in an exhibition organized by the same Harald Szeemann, then director of the Kunsthalle in Bern, in which Morris's strips of felt were presented as an example of what happens "when attitude becomes form" and as a work of art that is "almost entirely the result of manipulation of material." (Isn't all art "the result of manipulation of material"?) Had art in the past fifteen years not been "used to illustrate misguided sociological principles," much of it would never have seen the light. The takeover of art by ideological showmen has been a steadily expanding process; in Documenta 5, the fusion of art and words, repeatedly noted in this column, has been openly acknowledged without fear of scandal.

Adrift on the measureless ocean of "today's imagery," paintings, gestures, environments rely on inflatable cushions of phrases to rescue them from oblivion. Documenta 5 has pioneered in providing a theoretical basis for the dependence of art on ideology: it consists in the belief that art in our time fails in meaning unless it is assisted by interpretation, and that in the context of ideas non-art can be equally meaningful, as in the example of deep readings of comic strips or bedroom behavior. The bite of the slogan "Art Is Superfluous" is its implication of the emptiness of art in the absence of an added idea. Thus the exhibition directors' categories push forward, the museum hands take over, and the subjection of art to sociology proclaims that, above all, the artist is superfluous. The grand principle of avant-gardism has become "Liquidate art, liquidate yourselves."

DOCUMENTA 5

Lawrence Alloway

Artforum, October 1972

Documenta, unlike the Venice Biennale, has always been a centralized organization, not as some Americans suppose because of a Teutonic rage for order but because this is the only way to control the mid-century abundance of art when sampled on a large scale. It is also the only way to control the plurality of interest groups, at ministerial, mercantile, and independent levels activated by an exhibition of this magnitude. This year, to the fact of centralization, was added a decision that the show be thematic. In the past it was unnecessary to do so: the second Documenta in 1949, like the Biennale at the time, was filling in gaps in European

knowledge of the recent past, especially in the American section (roughly Pollock to Rauschenberg). The third Documenta, due mainly to Werner Haftmann, was a kind of homage to the human spirit, a compilation of great thoughts and high feeling embodied in recent art, painterly and existential. The assumption he made was far-reaching but of sufficient generality to pass unnoticed—it would still have enjoyed the consensual goodwill that bound together men like Carl Sandburg, Sir Herbert Read, and Alfred Barr. The fourth was American-oriented to the present moment exclusively, Rauschenberg's *Soundings* and after: it demonstrated the power of the Leo Castelli–Virginia Dwan–Heiner Friedrich–Konrad Fischer coalition of dealers. (These dealers' artists were seen together again, on a smaller scale, in New York at the Guggenheim International Exhibition in 1971.) Fischer is responsible for a part of the new Documenta, but the interesting decisions are those of Harald Szeemann and Jean-Christophe Ammann, who form with Arnold Bode, the working group of organizers. Another source for Documenta 5 is "Konzeption–Conception," an exhibition at the Stadtischen Museum, Leverkusen in 1969, which Fischer had coarranged. Eighteen of the artists in his section were in the earlier show. (Incidentally it does not represent a conflict of interest to use a dealer in a show of contemporary art—on the contrary, it probably facilitates cooperation with artists and collectors and is well within the tolerances of mid-century role-taking in the art world.)

The systematic program and the catalog are clearly traceable to Szeemann, whose earlier catalogs presented information in dossier format, though not on the scale of Documenta 5's monumental document. In addition, many of the artists were present in his earlier shows: thirty-eight of them in "Live in Your Head" (Kunsthalle, Bern, 1969) and eight in "Happenings and Fluxus" (Kunstverein, Cologne, 1970).

These exhibitions, one dealing with Conceptual art more thoroughly and earlier than anything in the United States, the other dealing lavishly with performance art, reveal interests that are strongly represented at Kassel.

The theme is: "Inquiry into Reality—Today's Imagery" and "reality has to be considered as the sum of all images—artistic and nonartistic." It should be noted that the organizers, owing to their theme, are to an extent in opposition to the dealers and to some of the artists: the dealers because they are not interested in "nonartistic images" and the artists because their work is being set into a theory apart from their intentions. The profit motive and the defense of esthetic autonomy are aligned against the ambitious thematic control of the organizers. In the ninteenth century, art dealing took the place of state employment or aristocratic patronage as the support of artists. Capitalist promotion and distribution of art could, of course, support more artists and more styles than the earlier systems. In this respect art dealing performed a role similar to publishing in the industrialization of culture. Despite artists' complaints against galleries, their freedom has derived ambiguously from their merchants.

There is some reason to think that Szeemann, for all his thematic planning, misjudged New York artists socially. He antagonized women artists as a group to whom he first paid almost no attention and then, after a complaint, contacted a number of them: Cecile Abish, Alice Adams, Alice Aycock, Cynthia Carlson, Agnes Denes, Laurace James, Brenda Miller, Mary Miss, Paula Tavins, and Jackie Winsor. Having discharged this obligation, he perfunctorily rejected them all. [...]

VENICE & KASSEL: THE OLD AND THE NEW POLITICS

Jan Van Der Marck

Art in America, November–December 1972

[...] The fifth Documenta, or D5, seemed to have devoted more attention to the definition of art than any mammoth exhibition, including its four quadrennial predecessors, has ever attempted.

To accept D5 one has to accept: 1.) that art is based on theory, and 2.) that esthetics is a decreasing part of art's theoretical underpinnings. Since theory is not all that readily apparent and, in fact, should not weigh down the work of art, those who organized D5 have decided to extrapolate meaning from art in the interest of mass education. Thus a show traditionally geared to the art producer has become one addressing itself to the art consumer. We may have arrived at that critical point where media communication has all but preempted the international exhibition's informative function. To retain its rationale and meaning to the art world, the international exhibition will have to rearrange its objectives, making education in depth its principal goal. D5 gave us an opportunity to evaluate the art world's first large-scale attempt to replace the nineteenth-century salon by a more meaningful vehicle.

The question, then, is not whether D5 included all art we like to think of as important today—it did not—but whether whatever art it chose to feature was intelligibly presented. Bazon Brock, a co-organizer of the exhibition, had as criterion that the choice of works included should reflect the theory on which D5 is based, and that the commentary (his audio-visual preface) should correctly interpret the works of art in the show. As for the theory, art, in the organizer's interpretation, is a dialectic proposition, once thought to be the sole province of esthetics but now more and more recognized as ideologically determined by historic and sociopolitical factors. The work of art as an individual creation is shown as related to the totality of phenomena, artistic and extra-artistic (or sub-artistic), with which the D5 visitor is confronted. The exhibition clearly proposes that we accept its replacing of art as object-carrier of beauty by art as system-reflector of reality. A systems esthetics has had its advocates for some time. But never has ideology hung so heavily over it, in private discourse or before a public forum. [...]

11

EXHIBITION

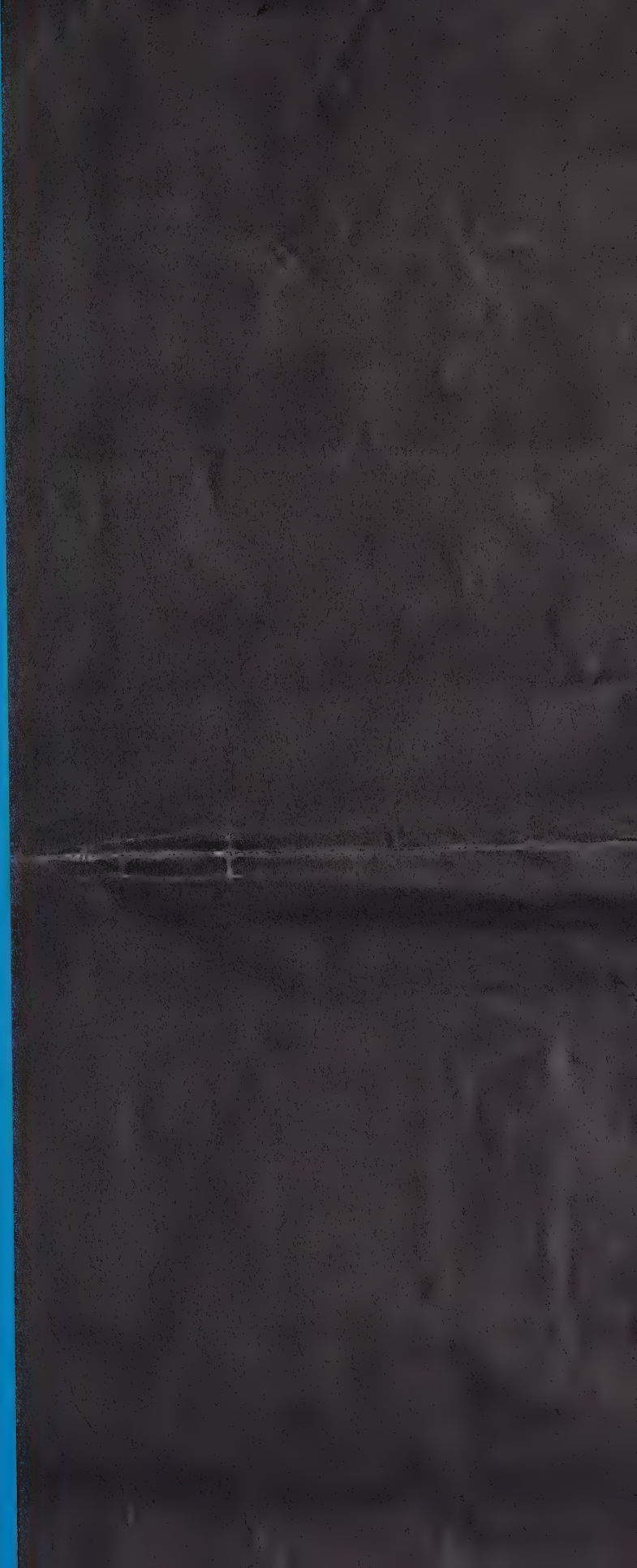
The Bulldozer Exhibition

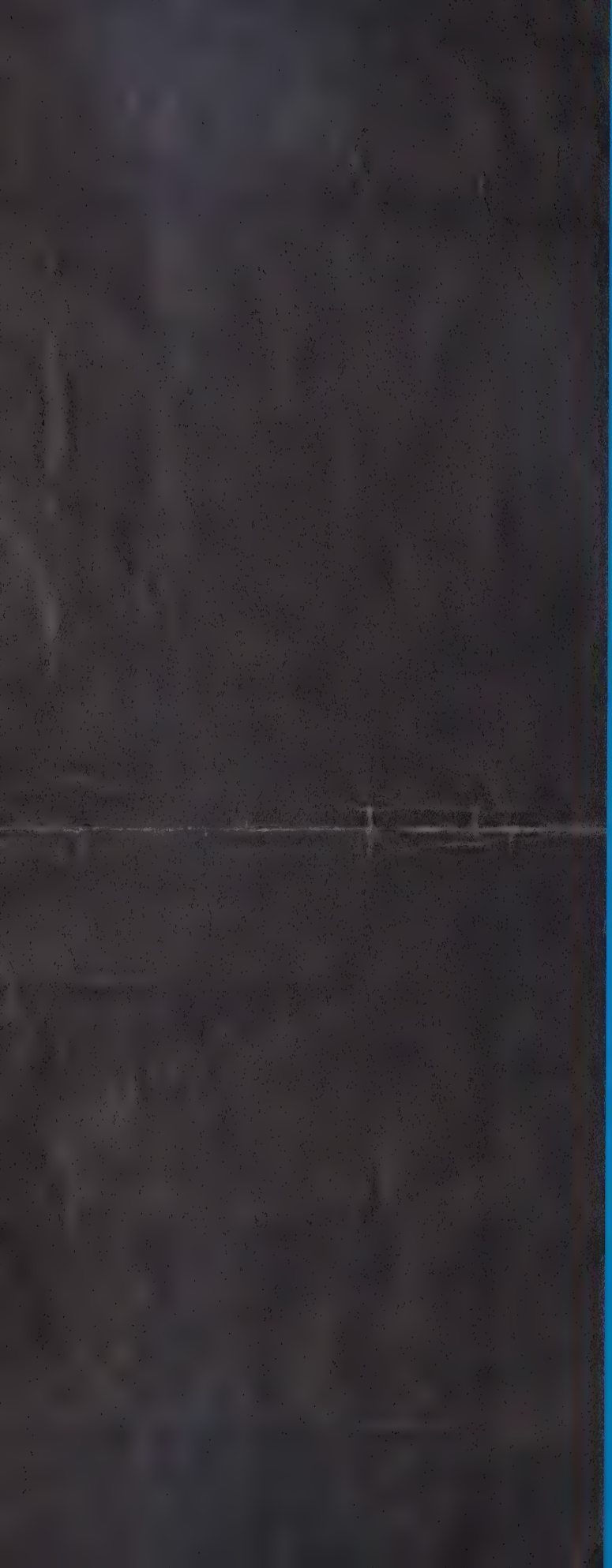
LOCATION

Belyayevo, Moscow

DATE

15 September 1974





CURATORS
Alexandr Glezer and Oscar Rabin

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Nadezhda Eiskaia, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, Lidiya Masterkova, Vladimir Nemukhin, Aleksandr Rabin, Oskar Rabin, Evgeni Rukhin, Boris Sheinberg, Yuri Zharkikh, V. Silnikov, V. Yerabier, I. Kholin

EXHIBITION CATALOG
None

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 24
Number of art works: unknown
Total attendance: ca.400

"The Bulldozer Exhibition" was a milestone in the history of nonconformist art in the Soviet Union. Its radical nature was not due to its content, but to its asserting the right to display work that deviated from the state definition of art. For the artists who planned a Sunday afternoon exhibition on an empty Moscow field, the violence they confronted came as a shock. But the authorities were no less surprised by the presence of foreign press, which turned "The Bulldozer Exhibition" into an international incident.

Although there had been a loosening of control over non-Socialist Realist art in the late 1950s, things changed with Nikita Khrushchev's 1962 denunciation of abstraction at the thirtieth anniversary exhibition of the Moscow Union of Artists in Manezh Exhibition Hall. Circumstances soon became more difficult for artists outside the official union, and they increasingly assembled in studios and apartments to show their work. In addition to such private gatherings, there were a small number of public exhibitions. One of these was organized in 1967 by collector Alexander Glezer at Moscow's Friendship Club, although it was closed by the authorities within hours. Among the exhibiting artists was Oscar Rabin, the central figure in mounting "The Bulldozer Exhibition."

On 2 September 1974 Rabin sent a letter to the Moscow City Council stating that a group of artists would exhibit their work at noon on 15 September in a field near the Belyayevo Metro station. The artists intended to hold the show with or without official permission, and they distributed an invitation for this "first fall viewing of paintings outdoors." After discussion with the cultural affairs department, Rabin was informed that a space would not be provided for an exhibition but neither was their outdoor show forbidden.

When the artists and a crowd of a few hundred arrived at the site, they were met by more than fifty men. Claiming to be volunteers making a park for the neighborhood, they confiscated paintings and used bulldozers, dump trucks, and water-sprayers to destroy artworks and disperse onlookers. But the authorities had not expected the attendance of foreign press and diplomats, and in the melee four American journalists were assaulted. The next day an article on the incident appeared in *The New York Times*, and the U.S. government lodged an official complaint.

In response to international publicity and diplomatic pressure, and informed by Rabin and his associates that they would return to the same location on 29 September, the government eventually granted permission for an exhibition on that date in Izmailovsky Park. About seventy artists participated, and the crowd on a beautiful Sunday afternoon was estimated at ten thousand. A French diplomat called it a Soviet Woodstock.

The landscapes, still-lifes, and portraits in these exhibitions were tame by Western standards. The only works that would have been thought advanced were those of Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, whose paintings were destroyed at "The Bulldozer Exhibition." Rabin also had asked Ilya Kabakov to participate in the shows, but he had declined, and there was no other conceptualist work in either exhibition.

As a consequence of these exhibitions, the government of Leonid Brezhnev established a new organization for those outside the Union of Artists. In February 1975, it held the first show of nonconformist art at a state exhibition site, the Beekeeping Pavilion, which attracted huge crowds. Despite offering more exhibition opportunities, however, the authorities maintained strict control over the public display of art. So private apartment exhibitions proliferated, and many unofficial artists emigrated or were expelled from the country. The legacy of "The Bulldozer Exhibition" would be fully realized only in the next decade, when the period of détente turned into that of glasnost.

Приглашаем Вас
на первый осенний просмотр картин
на открытом воздухе
с участием художников: О. Рабина, Е. Рухина,
В. Немухина, Л. Мастерковой, Н. Эльской,
Ю. Жарких, А. Рабина, Боруха Штейнберга,
А. Меламида, В. Комара, ~~А. Брусиловского~~.
В. Ситникова В Воробьева И Холина
Выставка состоится 15 сентября 1974 г.
с 12 до 14 часов
по адресу: конец Профсоюзной ул.
до пересечения с
ул. Островитянова

↖ Invitation to "The Bulldozer Exhibition." The text reads: "You are invited to the first fall Open-Air Art Exhibition. The following artists will participate: O. Rabin, E. Rukhin, V. Nemukhin, L.Mastervoka, N. Elskaia, Y. Zharkikh, A. Rabin, B. Shteinberg, A. Melamid, V. Komar, ~~A. Brussilovsky~~ [name stuck out], V. Sitnikov, V. Vorobiev, I. Kholin. The exhibition will be held on 15 September 1974, from 12 to 2 p.m., at the end of Profsouzmaya and Ostrovitianov streets."

↑ Vitaly Komar (left) carries an easel to display paintings in the empty lot commandeered by the organizers of "The Bulldozer Exhibition."

← Due to the actions of the Soviet police, only a few photographs have survived of the one-day exhibition.

↗ Crowds attending the exhibition are dispersed by a truck spraying water.

↑ Crowds gathering at "The Bulldozer Exhibition." A taxi (foreground) delivers people to the site, which was far from central Moscow.

→ A truck spraying water at crowds attending the exhibition.

↑↑ Exhibitors at the "The Bulldozer Exhibition," (left to right): Margarita Tupitsyn, Vladimir Nemukhin, Viktor Tupitsyn, and Sergei Bordachev. Viktor Tupitsyn recalls that "On September 1, 1974, two weeks prior to the show, my wife Margarita and I were visited by Nemukhin, [Lydia] Masterkova, Evgenii Rukhin, and [Oscar] Rabin, who let us in on their plan to organize an outdoor exhibition. In their opinion, the empty lot alongside our house seemed the most suitable place for this type of event. In accordance with their plan, our apartment on Ostrovitianov Street (in Beliaevo) would become a repository for works to be exhibited, and also a place for the artists to sleep the day before the show so that they might avoid arrest on the way to the lot."—Viktor Tupitsyn, *The Museological Unconscious.*

↑ *Two Violins* by Oskar Rabin, damaged following the violent police actions on 15 September 1974. Rabin was one of the principal organizers of the "Bulldozer Exhibition." He settled in France in 1978.

↗ Several damaged paintings, following the violent closure of the exhibition.

→ Damaged work by Lydia Masterkova. She emigrated to Paris, France, the following year.

↖ Komar and Melamid's *Double Self Portrait*, which was destroyed at "The Bulldozer Exhibition." The works destroyed at the exhibition were all later remade.

↑ Vitaly Komar standing with Komar and Melamid's *Quotation*, which was destroyed at "The Bulldozer Exhibition." Ironically, the subject of the work was censorship, with the letters of the text being blanked out.

← Komar and Melamid's *Forward to the Lofty Goal*, which was destroyed at "The Bulldozer Exhibition."

↑ Invitation to the exhibition "Second Fall Open Air Show", Moscow, Izmailovsky Park, 26 September 1974. The exhibition was organized in response to the violent closing of the original exhibition on 15 September. The second exhibition was peaceful.

↗ "Second Fall Open Air Show," showing (left to right), an unidentified man, Viktor Tupitsyn, Oskar Rabin, and Nadezhda Elskaya.

→ Artists and visitors at the "Second Fall Open Air Show."

OR 151330Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
IMMEDIATE 2506
USA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

Fax sent from the American Embassy in Moscow to the Secretary of State in Washington, D.C. (who at that time was Henry Kissinger), 15 September 1974

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 13964

1.) SUMMARY. AUTHORITIES ROUGHLY CLOSED DOWN AN OPEN-AIR EXHIBIT OF SOVIET "UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS" ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MOSCOW SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 15, AND AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WERE AMONG THOSE SLIGHTLY ROUGHED UP. END SUMMARY.

2.) OSCAR RABIN, ONE OF PRIMARY ORGANIZERS OF EVENT, HAD SOUGHT MOSSOVIET PERMISSION TO STAGE EXHIBIT IN OPEN AREA NEAR BELYAYEVA METRO STATION. ACCORDING TO OTHER ARTISTS HE WAS LED TO BELIEVE PERMISSION MIGHT BE GRANTED, BUT ON SEPTEMBER 13, LAST WORKING DAY BEFORE SCHEDULED EVENT, HE WAS GIVEN NEITHER YES NOR NO ANSWER BY MOSSOVIET. ARTISTS PLANNED TO ATTEMPT TO OPEN EXHIBIT AT NOON ANYWAY, BUT IT WAS EFFICIENTLY BROKEN UP BY 1:15 BY MILITIA, CONTINGENT OF YOUNG KOMSOMOL, AND CITY STREET-CLEANING WATER-SPRAYING TRUCKS AND BULLDOZERS.

3.) SEVERAL ARTIST PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING OSCAR RABIN, WERE ROUGHLY THRUST INTO WAITING MILITIA CARS, SOME WITH GRATUITOUS KARATE CHOPS.

4.) AT LEAST SEVERAL CANVASES, SOME OF THEM QUITE LARGE, WERE WRESTED FROM ARTISTS AND THROWN INTO DUMP TRUCK FILLED WITH SAND. ONE OF TWO YOUNG MEN IN BACK OF TRUCK DROPPED THEM ONTO THE STAND AND STOOD ON THEM WITH A PROUD SMIRK. OTHER CANVASES WERE REPORTEDLY BROKEN UP BY RAIDERS, AND SOME PLOWED UNDER BY BULLDOZERS.

5.) WATER TRUCKS WERE USED TO CLEAR CROWD, WHICH ESTIMATED AT 400 AT PEAK, AND MILITIA THREATENED TO BULLDOZE PARKED CARS OF SPECTATORS—INCLUDING THOSE OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS. CROWD WHICH GATHERED DESPITE LIGHT RAIN WAS LARGELY MADE UP OF ARTISTS AND SUPPORTERS, CORRESPONDENTS, DIPLOMATS, AND A MIXTURE OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.

6.) AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS COVERING AND PHOTOGRAPHING EVENT WERE ROUGHED UP. AP CORRESPONDENT LYNNE OLSON WAS PUSHED AND PUNCHED TO GROUND. AND NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT CHRIS WREN REPORTED TOOTH DAMAGED WHEN CAMERA WAS PUSHED INTO HIS FACE. EMBASSY CONSOFF WHO WAS PRESENT ENDEAVORED TO INTERVENE TO PROTECT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS, AND DISSUADED SOME YOUNG MEN FROM SEIZING AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS' FILM. CONSOFF'S ACTION MAY ALSO HAVE REDUCED THE MANHANDLING OF THE CORRESPONDENTS, WHICH WAS GOING ON AT SAME TIME. THE YOUNG MEN CHALLENGED BY CONSOFF TO SHOW DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THEIR POLICE AUTHORITY COULD ONLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS KOMSOMOL MEMBERS, AND CONSOFF DOUBTS THEY WERE KGB PLAIN CLOTHESMEN AS CORRESPONDENTS BELIEVE. ONE OLDER MAN WHO SEEMED BE IN AUTHORITY REFUSED TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF, AND WOULD SAY ONLY THAT "WE ARE THE WORKING CLASS, THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT." CONSOFF AND CORRESPONDENTS COMPLAINED TO UNIFORMED MILITIA OF THEIR FAILURE TO PROTECT MISS OLSON.

7.) EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS AT LEAST ONE CORRESPONDENT IS FILING STORY THAT CONSOFF WAS ROUGHED UP. ALTHOUGH CONSOFF WAS SHOVED AROUND IN FRACAS, ASSAILANTS IMMEDIATELY TOOK THEIR HANDS OFF HIM WHEN CONSOFF IDENTIFIED HIMSELF, AND HE DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT HE WAS ROUGHED UP.

8.) EMBASSY PLANS TO PROTEST TO MFA FAILURE OF MILITIA TO PROTECT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS FROM MANHANDLING, AND HAS SO INFORMED MOSCOW PRESS CORPS.

RUSSIANS DISRUPT MODERN ART SHOW WITH BULLDOZERS
UNOFFICIAL OUTSIDE EXHIBITION DISPERSED—BYSTANDERS HIT AND PAINTINGS CONFISCATED

Christopher S. Wren

The New York Times, 16 September 1974

MOSCOW, Sept 15—In a dramatic confrontation over nonconformist art, Soviet authorities used bulldozers, dump trucks, and water-spraying trucks today to break up an outdoor exhibition of unofficial art as it was being set up in a vacant lot.

A crowd of several hundred people, among them artists, Western diplomats, correspondents, and curious neighborhood residents, scattered when dump trucks and a pair of bulldozers overran what the artists had billed as the first autumn outdoor art show in the Soviet Union.

Two water trucks, normally used for street cleaning, pursued the fleeing crowds across the street. A handful of people pelted the trucks with clods of dirt.

THREE AMERICANS STRUCK

Three American correspondents—two men and a woman—were beaten by young vigilantes who roamed the scene, intimidating people to move on. Several uniformed police looked on impassively and made no effort to stop the violence.

The young men who appeared to be organized into teams, ripped up, trampled and threw more than a dozen paintings into a dump truck to be covered with mud and driven away. Artists who protested were

roughed up and at least five were arrested. An unknown number of angry spectators were taken to a nearby police station.

Later one spectator who was released, Aleksei Tyapushkin, reportedly a member of the official Union of Artists and a decorated World War II veteran, said the police had told him that all the confiscated paintings had been burned.

Thirteen organizers of the exhibition sent a written protest to the Communist Party Politburo protesting lawlessness, arbitrary misuse of force, and violation of constitutional rights. They demanded an investigation, the return of their works, and the punishment of those responsible.

A man in a trenchcoat who supervised the operation identified himself as an official of the executive committee of the city's southwest district. He asserted that the art exhibit was being broken up because workers had volunteered their Sundays to convert the empty lot into a "park of culture." He gave his name as Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov, a Russian equivalent of John Doe.

Witnesses reported, however, that no work was undertaken at the lot after the exhibition had been disrupted. The young men who had intimidated the exhibitors and spectators assembled afterward and, upon instruction, left in a group, according to a person who remained at the site.

The American correspondents were assaulted after they had left the lot and were standing on a street near their automobile, watching the water trucks spraying the spectators.

CAMERA CHIPS A TOOTH

An attempt to photograph a water truck as it drove over the curb to pursue one group caused a group of vigilantes to come up and smash the camera into this correspondent's face, chipping a front tooth. After this, the vigilantes' leader administered a blow in the stomach while the others seized and held his arms and torso.

Lynne Olson of The Associated Press rushed over and shouted at the vigilantes to stop and the leader turned around and hit her in the stomach with the same force, sending her sprawling.

Michael Parks of the *Baltimore Sun* was hit in the stomach by another young man while a policeman 5 feet [1.5 meters] away looked on.

When Russell Jones of the American Broadcasting Company protested, he was briefly manhandled but was not struck.

About two dozen artists, some from as far as Leningrad, Pskov, and Vladimir, had come to exhibit their works at the show, which the organizers said was unofficial but not prohibited.

Some of the artists, the organizers said, have had works displayed in New York, San Francisco, London, Paris, and Rome. But they have not been allowed to exhibit formally here and have not been accepted for membership in the Union of Artists because their styles do not conform with Moscow's art doctrine, Socialist Realism.

OFFICIALS ADVISED OF PLANS

Two weeks ago, the organizing group of artists informed the Moscow City Council that they intended to hold an outdoor art show and asked to be informed within a week if there were objections.

At the council's request, the artists took their works for inspection by Communist party officials on Wednesday. On Friday, they said, a city council official told them the vacant lot was available and that the exhibition would be neither encouraged nor forbidden.

But when the artists began setting up their works today on the lot, off Profsoyuznaya Street, they were immediately confronted by the trucks, bulldozers, and water trucks and were ordered to leave.

The violence erupted too quickly to determine who had given the orders, although a few bystanders attributed them to a Mr. Knigin, who heads the local Communist Party's ideological section.

Underground art has always encountered difficulties in the Soviet Union. In 1962, Nikita Khrushchev, then Premier, in a famous showdown with nonconformist artists, condemned as "filth" an unofficially organized exhibition that contained some works in abstract and other modem styles. Attempted unofficial exhibitions here in 1967, 1969, and 1971 were closed quickly by authorities, although without violence.

"HEROIC OPTIMISM" DEMANDED

Today, the paintings were seized too swiftly for spectators to get any idea of their content. But many of the artists are known for their modernism, abstractions, and fantasies, Pop Art and nudes, as well as somber street scenes and landscapes, that do not fit into the mold of heroic optimism demanded of art by Soviet authorities.

However, Oskar Rabin, an artist known abroad and an organizer of the exhibition, said earlier that the artists would not bring any works that would be considered anti-Soviet or pornographic.

The exhibition attracted diplomats from the United States, Western Europe, Asia, and Latin America. They ended up running for safety.

Those arrested today were identified as Oskar Rabin, his son Aleksandr, Nadezhda Elskaya, Yevgeny Rukhin, and Valentin Vorobyov. Other artists who were expected to exhibit included Vladimir Nemukhin, Lidiya Masterkova, Boris Shteinberg, Aleksandr Malamid, Vasily Sitnikov, and Igor Kholin.

LETTER SENT TO THE POLITBURO BY THE BULLDOZER EXHIBITION ARTISTS, *16 September 1974*

Twenty-four artists from Moscow, Leningrad, Pskov, and Vladimir planned to hold their fall exhibition in the open air on 15 September. They gave the Moscow City Council advance notice of their intention in a letter dispatched on 2 September. Moscow council officials, headed by K. A. Sukhinich, failed to give the artists any indication that the spot that they had chosen for the showing of their pictures, on wasteland far from any city streets, was unsuitable or forbidden. Yet at twelve noon on 15 September the artists and numerous spectators were met at the exhibition site by police in civilian clothes with dump trucks and bulldozers. The artists' pictures were taken

away and their arms twisted and dislocated. The bulldozer drivers literally chased the artists and spectators. One bulldozer driver, after running over pictures by Oscar Rabin, knocked the painter off his feet, and another plowed into a confused crowd of people. Water canon scattered artists and spectators with powerful jets of water. Eighteen pictures were mutilated and burned by uncontrolled young thugs. Five artists were detained by the police, who to our surprise, took a most active part in the assault on artists and the destruction of their works.

We demand an investigation of these events, which are a disgrace to our country, the punishment of those responsible, and the return of the surviving pictures. We also inform you that in two weeks' time, on Sunday, 29 September, in the same place, we shall re-erect the open-air exhibition of our pictures that was sabotaged by mischief makers.

We ask you to remind the police and other guardians of public order that they are there not to encourage barbarism and hooliganism, but to defend others from it –in this case spectators, artists, and works of art.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sovetskaia kul'tura, Moscow, 18 September 1974

Are you aware of what happened on September 15 in our borough of Cheromushki? On the morning of that day, we, residents and workers of local companies, gathered together for a mass meeting of volunteers—a *voskresnik*—and dedicated ourselves to turning a park into a greener and better-equipped place for our neighborhood. We were perplexed and indignant when cars, one after another, began to stop at the lot across from the park at the intersection of Profsouzmaya and Ostrovitianov streets at about twelve o'clock. A handful of disheveled, brazen people began to drag from their cars very strange and colorful framed and unframed canvases with the intention of exhibiting them right there in the open air despite the fact that we and the other volunteers were still working. When they descended on the scene, our work schedule was disturbed. Crowds and commotion started on the quiet crossroads. These uninvited guests behaved provocatively. They wrenched shovels and rakes from the workers, pushing them off the lawn, and tore posters that appealed for participation in the *voskresnik*. They disturbed the traffic and cursed obscenities. It is interesting, however, that some foreigners came also, before the "artists," and then with them. They arrived in cars clearly marked with license plates from embassies of capitalist countries. Shockingly, some of the paintings arrived in those very cars. Among the foreigners, we discovered later, were many journalists who came, not merely to report on "the artistic event," but to aggressively take pictures of the chaos and to actively interfere. A correspondent from the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*, Udgord Nils Morten, punched a volunteer police officer in the face, while the office castigated him for his offensive act. There were many similar incidents. The indecent behavior by the group of artists-formalists turned out to be a planned political provocation.

Upon the request of the participants of the *voskresnik*, the volunteer police intervened in the situation and asked help from the militia. Some organizers of the "exhibition" were delivered to the militia with the purpose of identifying them. They turned out to be "liberal artists," "nonconformists" like Rabin, Kropivinitsky, Sychev, Elskaia, Tal, Slavutskaja, Tupitsyn, and others—about fifteen in number. The paintings they brought were, in our opinion, contrary to artistic intentions and elicited nothing but disgust and disdainful laughter. Since all these people call themselves artists, we contacted the Artists Union to ask for clarification and were told that none of them were members of the Artists Union of the USSR. And so the artists clearly acted on their own accord without permission from the union. One week ago, they apparently contacted the Moscow City Council, which explained to them all the procedures required for mounting and organizing an art exhibition in Moscow, but they did not pay attention to any of the instructions. The Moscow City Council requested that the artists contact the Moscow Artists Union. The union explained all the necessary requirements, but the artists never followed them.

It became clear that some of these "artists" who conspired to arrange an exhibition in such a strange way have managed to have exhibitions abroad and to sell their paintings there. They did not do it for the money, but rather for the prestige of being known as unrecognized artists in their own country.

As everyone knows, the manipulation of their reputation here as "unrecognized artists" has not yet awarded any of them a laurel wreath. Even worse, they violated public order, committed acts of unbridled hooliganism – things not to be tolerated from anybody. We residents in Cheryomushki who witnessed this mayhem protest categorically against similar "artistic actions and require that the law of our country and public order in the capital be respected by so-called liberal artists who seemingly know nothing about real art, and by their foreign friends and patrons.

Participants of *voskresnik*:
V. Federov, metal turner, winner of an exemplary worker competition
E. Swistunov, radio technician, winner of an exemplary worker competition
V. Polovinka, Director of the Department of Road Management and Equipment of the Borough of Cheryomushki, Deputy of the Borough Union of Worker Deputies
B. Timashev, electrician

MOSCOW ARTISTS REGAIN PAINTING SOME OF SEIZED WORKS ARE RETURNED—TASS HINTS BAN ON NEW SHOW

The New York Times, 19 September 1974

MOSCOW, Sept. 18—Ten of the 18 paintings seized by young vigilantes and plainclothesmen at a nonconformist art show last Sunday have been returned to the artists and their friends.

Eight others, including two of the most valuable, are feared lost for good.

The return of some of the paintings through unidentified people was seen as a gesture by the Soviet authorities to try to appease public opinion abroad; where the raid on the outdoor art show caused a storm of editorial criticism.

At the same time, the Soviet press agency Tass distributed a commentary indicating that the authorities would bar a second attempt to hold the art show on the same empty lot on Sept. 29, saying that it was a construction area unsuitable for an exhibition.

Soviet sources, in an effort to disclaim that responsibility lay with the Kremlin leadership, put out the word that clears for disruption of the show had been given by the Moscow city authorities. Diplomats were skeptical, but they suggested that high-level officials might have concluded that the rough tactics were a mistake.

"CHEAP PROVOCATION" SEEN

The Tass commentary denounced the show as a "cheap provocation" by little known and eccentric painters designed "to catch the public eye and gain publicity for themselves."

Tass accused Western newsmen, three of whom were assaulted by the vigilantes, of "distortion and garbling of the facts" in their "lurid pictures of the 'dispersal' of the show."

Diplomats were also present during the fracas, and the United States protested to the Soviet Union over mistreatment of American newsmen.

There was no indication that either the Tass denunciation or the return of some paintings would deter the artists from trying once again to hold their show. Additional nonconformist painters were said to have expressed interest in joining the original group of twenty-four in a second exhibition.

The circumstances of the return of ten paintings were related by Aleksandr Glazer [Alexsander Glezer], a poet and art collector who has acted as a spokesman for the artists. He said he was tipped off yesterday that he could recover the paintings' at an apartment near the Kiev Railroad Station.

NO EXPLANATION GIVEN

There, he found two women who said they had found the paintings in the vacant lot near the outskirts of the city where the show was to have taken place. They said they wanted to return them and remain anonymous, Mr. Glazer said.

No explanation was offered of how they had known to contact him or why they had been at the site of the art show, several miles from their apartment. These circumstances suggested that higher authorities had been disturbed by the foreign reaction to the incident and had ordered the return of the paintings.

Three of the returned paintings were damaged. Others were smeared with mud.

The paintings included two each by Nadezhda Yelskaya, Yevgeny Rukhin of Leningrad, Aleksandr Rabin, and joint works by Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid, and one each by Lidiya Masterkova and Yuri Zharkikh. But two others by Oskar Rabin, the best known of the artists, were not returned, Mr. Glazer said. Nor were others by Mr. Rukhin and Mr. Zharkikh.

The nonconformist painters, who would not be considered avant-garde in the West, fall outside orthodox Socialist Realism either because of modernistic techniques, irreverent styles, or gloomy subjects. They fall into a variety of artistic schools from Pop Art to abstractions, from Expressionism to formalism and fantasies.

SECOND PROTEST BY US

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18 – The United States has protested a second time to the Soviet government about the assault on American newsmen last Sunday.

The protest was made orally yesterday to Yuli M. Vorontsov, minister counselor of the Soviet embassy, by John A. Armitage, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. The first protest was conveyed in Moscow on Monday.

The protests were said to have made clear that the United States did not like such treatment of newsmen and that it would not help the Soviet Union to improve its image in this country.

5 RUSSIANS ARE SENTENCED IN MOSCOW AFTER ART-SHOW FRACAS

Hendrick Smith

The New York Times, 17 September 1974

MOSCOW, Sept. 16 – A municipal court today imposed fifteen-day prison terms and fines on four artists and a photographer friend on charges of petty hooliganism for resisting bands of vigilantes who broke up an outdoor nonconformist art show yesterday.

At the same time the United States embassy lodged a protest with the Foreign Minister over the mistreatment of three American correspondents who were beaten by unidentified persons working with others who ran bulldozers, dump trucks, and sprinkler vehicles through the site of the art show.

One Russian who was taken to a police station said he had evidence that the violence had been carried out by plain clothesmen.

Viktor Tupitsyn, a thirty-one-year-old mathematician, said that while he was detained at the 90th Precinct he had seen some of the young vigilantes pass near him into a back room and reemerge in police uniforms. He said he had also seen a noticed on the office bulletin board instructing "all the staff to report in civilian clothes" on Sunday morning, in evident preparation for disrupting the art show. [...]

12

EXHIBITION

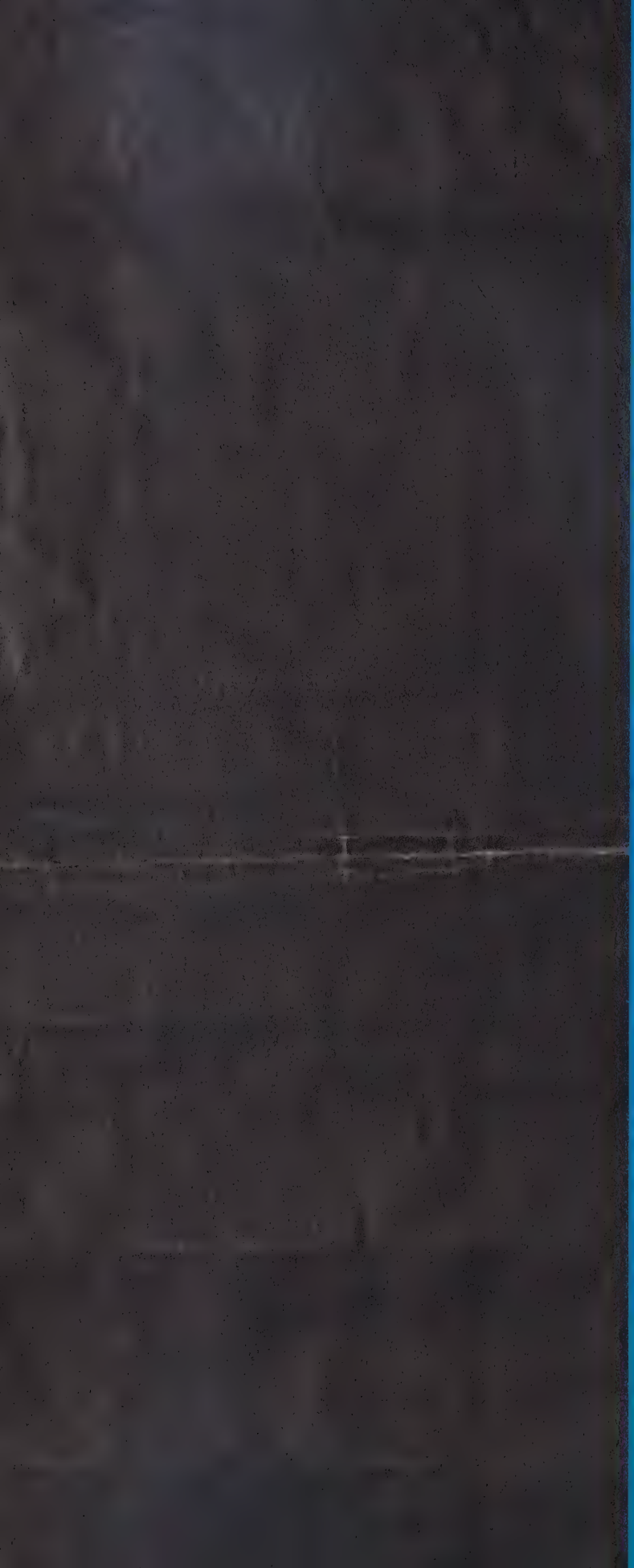
The Times Square Show

LOCATION

41st Street and 7th Avenue, New York

DATE

1–30 June 1980



CURATORS
Collaborative Projects Inc. (COLAB) and Fashion Moda

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Over one hundred artists, including: L. Abrahms, John Ahearn, Charlie Ahearn, Jules Allen, Amsterdam Theater, Ehry Anderson, Anonymous, Doug Ball, Nan Becker, Michael Bidlo, Bill & Mark, Mark Blaine, Jeff Blechman, Richard Bosman, Mare Brass, Fred Brathwaite, Bread & Roses, Leni Brown, Edward Brzezinski, Andrea Callard, Jim Casebere, Georgeen Comerford, Annie Dean, Jimmy DeSana, Eva Di Carlo, Jane Dickson, Leah Douglas, Wally Edwards, Babs Egan, Stephen Ens, Bil Everton, Arnold Fern, Colen Fitzgibbon, Mary Ann Fowler, Angelo Fremont, Joe Fyfe, Bobby G, Robert Gaines, Matthew Geller, Mike Glier, Mimi Gross, Alan Guttman, Julie Hair, David Hammons, Duncan Hannah, Willy Heeks, Candace Hill Montgomery, Rebecca Howland, Peter Jameson, Alex Katz, Christof Kohlhofer, Bill Komoski, Justen Ladda, Gregory Lehman, Joe Lewis, Margret Lippard, Jar Mal, Aline Mayer, Rosemary Mayer, Maryle, Scott Miller, Richard Moek, Howie Montag, John Morton, James Nares, Paulette Nenner, Ann Newmarch, Michael Norton, Jackie Ochs, Tom Otterness, Lon Payne, Cara Perlman, Anne Petrone, Scott Pfaffman, Suzanne Pitt, Caz Porter, Judy Rifka, Mike Robinson, Mike Roddy, Anne-Marie Rousseau, Christy Rupp, Samo (Jean-Michel Basquiat), Kenny Scharf, Sandy Seymour, Jane Sherry, Teri Slotkin, Kiki Smith, Ann Smith, Harry Spitz, Wolfgang Staehle, Janet Stein, Bill Stephans, Jamie Summers, Kathleen Thomas, Robert Torres, Tom Warner, David Wells, Reese Williams, Robin Winters, Janet Ziff

EXHIBITION CATALOG
None

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: over 100
Number of artworks: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

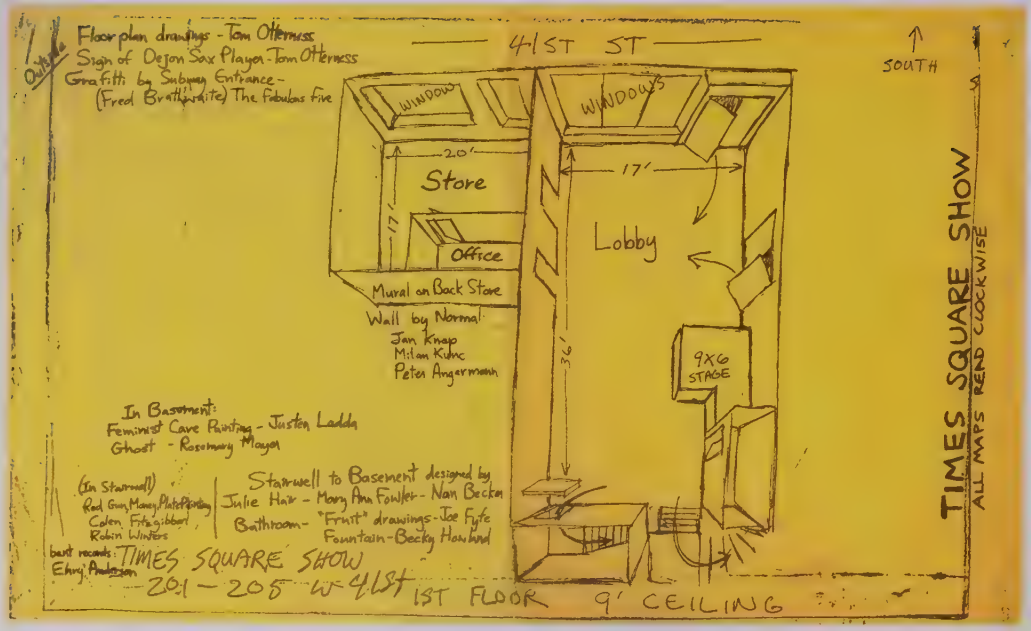
Filling all four floors of a former massage parlor on the corner of Seventh Avenue and West 41st Street in New York City, "The Times Square Show" was hailed by the *Village Voice* as "the first major exhibition of radical art in the '80s." The show was assembled by the artists' association Collaborative Projects, Inc. (Colab), and it evoked an earlier time when artists, rather than institutions, organized the central exhibitions of the avant-garde. The display was cacophonous like that of the 1920 Berlin Dada Fair, and Colab similarly connected art and politics and embraced the grungy life of the street. And here the street was part of the show, which was open twenty-four hours a day for the entire month of June in an area of tawdriness and urban decline.

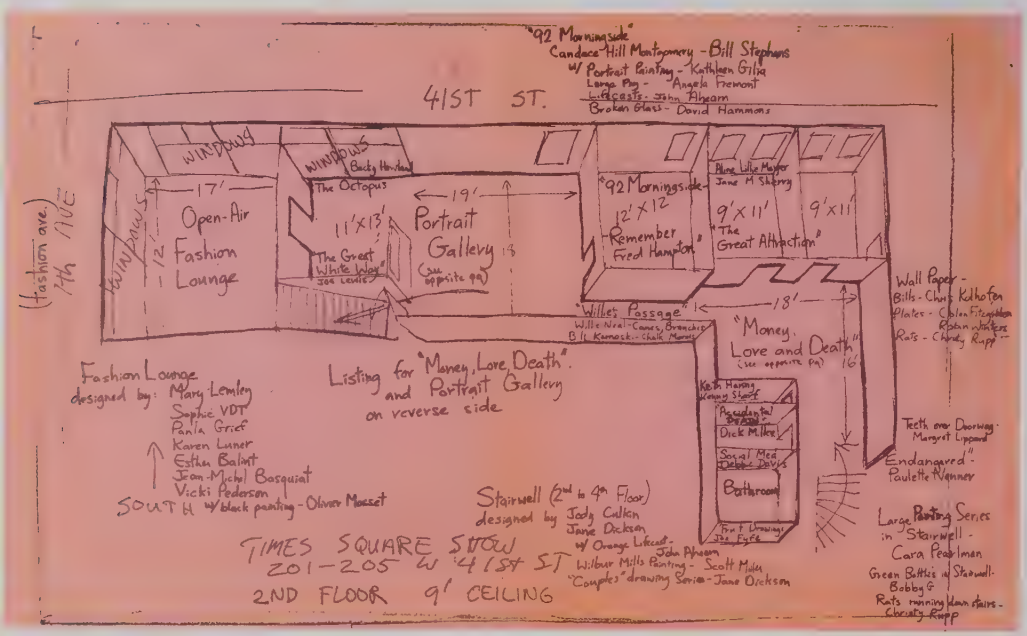
Colab was formed in 1977, and its members' early projects focused on publications, film, and video, including a cable television program. But in January 1979, the group began sponsoring theme exhibitions in lofts and storefront spaces. With such titles as "The Income and Wealth Show," "The Doctors and Dentists Show" (art for reception rooms), and "The Manifesto Show," the year culminated in Colab's most well-known effort before Times Square, "The Real Estate Show." In December some Colab members occupied a New York City-owned building on the Lower East Side to mount an exhibition about the politics of real-estate development. It opened on 1 January, was closed by city authorities the next day, and reoccupied by Colab a week later. Ironically, given the targeting of landlords in "The Real Estate Show," after John Ahearn and Tom Otterness found a building in Times Square for the group's largest exhibition, the landlord allowed Colab to use it without charge.

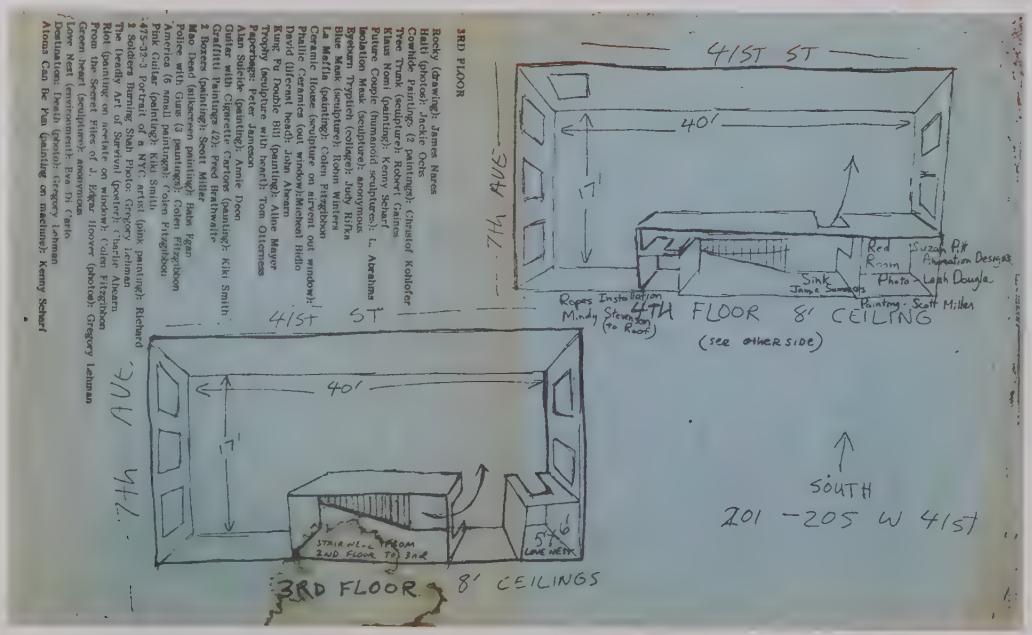
More than one hundred artists answered a call for pieces that related to Times Square, including many women and artists of color. On the street-level first floor, music, performances, and film and video screenings were featured on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. There was also a souvenir shop organized by Kiki Smith, which offered inexpensive artist-made objects. Christy Rupp's rats led up the stairs to six small rooms on the second floor, including a gallery of portraits. Much of the graffiti art was concentrated on the third floor. On the fourth floor, Tom Otterness hung a boxing bag and a huge chalkboard for public use. Otterness also prepared a detailed floor plan to identify the artists, as there were no labels and few signatures.

Despite the space being free, more than $32,000 was spent on the exhibition. Most of this went for advertising in newspapers, magazines, and on television, along with posters and flyers. There also was also an animated billboard in Times Square of hands playing three-card monte, a street hustler's card game, designed by Jane Dickson and John Ahearn and provided to Colab at no cost. But three-quarters of the expenses were covered by grants from government agencies and foundations, for Colab was registered as a nonprofit corporation in order to garner such funding. Yet despite its collaboration on the show with the Bronx-based organization Fashion Moda, Colab distanced itself from the alternative space movement.

As indicated by reviews appearing in major newspapers and national art magazines, "The Times Square Show" sat on the cusp of change. The next year commercial galleries began opening in the East Village, and in the institutional space of P.S. 1, Diego Cortez, who had organized the first Colab-sponsored exhibition ("The Batman Show"), presented almost a thousand works in "New York–New Wave." The contrast between the controlled display at P.S. 1 and the unruliness of "The Times Square Show" suggested the impending transformation of what had been a marginal youth and artistic culture.






3RD FLOOR
Rocky (drawing): James Nares
Untitled (Self-Portrait): Jackie Ochs
Cowhide Pool (painting): Christof Kohlhofer
Tree Trunk (sculpture): Robert Gober
Klaus Nomi (painting): Kenny Scharf
Future Couple (humanoid sculptures): L. Abrahms
Isolation Mask (sculpture): anonymous
Byebum Tryptich (collage): Judy Rifka
Blue Mask (sculpture): Robin Winters
Ceramic (flowering): Colen Fitzgibbon
Phallic Ceramics (out window/dirt on armbow): Robin Winters
David (fifcrat head): John Ahearn
Kung Fu Double Bill (painting): Alice Mayer
Trophy (sculpture with beard): Tom Otterness
Paperdogs: Peter Jamieson
Abstract (painting): Annie Dicce
Chair Sculptor (painting): Annie Dicce
Graffiti (Untitled): Fabulous (painting): Kiki Smith
2 Boxers (painting): Scott Miller
Mao Dead (silkscreen painting): Bates Lyon
Police with Guns (3 paintings): Colen Fitzgibbon
America (6 small paintings): Colen Fitzgibbon
Pink Guitar (painting): Kiki Smith
Self-Portrait of a NYC artist (pink painting): Richard Hambleton
Self-Portrait (painting): Gregory Lehman
The Deadly Art of Survival (painting): Gregory Lehman
Riot (painting on acetate on window): Colen Fitzgibbon
From the Secret Files of J. Edgar Hoover (photos): Gregory Lehman
Green Heart (sculpture): anonymous
Love Nest (environment): Eva Di Carlo
Destination: Death (photo): Gregory Lehman
Alaska Can Be Fun (painting on mattress): Kenny Scharf
41ST ST
40'
17'
7th AVE
Red Room
Suzan Pitt Fitzpatrick Designs
Sink James Siena
Photo Leah Douglas
Painting - Scott Miller
Ropes Installation Mindy Stewart
4TH FLOOR
8' CEILING
(see other side)
41ST ST
40'
17'
7th AVE
STAIRWELL FROM 2ND FLOOR TO 3RD
5'6" LOW HERE
3RD FLOOR
8' CEILINGS
SOUTH
201 - 205 W 41ST

↖ Floor plan of "The Times Square Show," drawn by Tom Otterness, showing the first (street-level) floor, including the lobby with stage for performances, the shop selling artists' work, and the office.

← Floor plan of the second floor.

↙ Floor plan of the third and fourth floors.

↗ Three TV advertisements were created and paid for by Colab to announce its upcoming "The Times Square Show," to be broadcast on the popular cable television station Channel 5, WNEW.

↗↗ John Ahearn's poster for "The Times Square Show" featured two hands playing a card game (three-card monte). The motif also appeared in his and Jane Dickson's giant Spectasope billboard above Times Square.

→ Poster for "The Times Square Show," which plays on the fact that the exhibition was housed in a former massage parlor.

→→ Schedule for events at "The Times Square Show." Underground legend Jack Smith performed his *Exotic Landlordism of the World* on Friday, 13 June, and Saturday, 14 June. Reviewing Smith's performance for *Artforum*, September 1980, J. Hoberman noted Smith's "ability to alienate even sympathetic audiences."

TIMES SQUARE SHOW

opens 6-1-80
thru 6-30-80

ARE AMERICANS AFRAID OF SEX?

at 7th Ave + 41st

ART POLITICS SEX
STORE FILMS
PERFORMANCE + VIDEO

EXOTIC EVENTS at the TIMES SQUARE SHOW 201 W. 41st St. & 7th Ave
events every Friday, Saturday & Sunday nite- 7pm, 9pm, 12: 391-8609

SUNDAY June 1 — OPENING NITE ! live music of the RAYBEATS & ERIKA VAN DAMM food beer juke box...

FRIDAY June 6
7pm $2 CONGO OYE video by Bill Stephens with Eldridge Cleaver
9pm $2.50 PSYCHIC PLAGUE performed by Gary Indiana
VIVA,VIVA film by Michael Auder with Ondine & Viva
12: $2 MINUS ZERO film by Michael Oblowitz

SATURDAY June 7
7pm $2 TOPLESS film by Jane Sherry and Cara Perlman
WORD OF MOUTH film by Aline Mayer
JANE MANSFIELD&BARBARA STREISAND & LADY WRESTLERS- video X
9pm $2.50 THE OFFENDERS film by Scott B & Beth B
UN CHANT D'AMOR film by Jean Genet
12: $2 SINGLE ROOM FURNISHED feature film with Jane Mansfield

SUNDAY June 8
7pm $2 MACHINE SEX video by Mark Pauline
INSPECTOR HOWE video by Beth B & Scott B
OVERLOAD film by Larry Meltzer
9pm $2.50 SCORPIO RISING film by Kenneth Ager
WIDE ANGLE SAXON film by George Landau
TU-STORY film by Bing Lee RHYTHYM film by Rick Greenwald
WHO SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS film by Peter von Ziegesar
12: $2 AMAZONAS & SICA SICA SISTER video by Mark Kehoe

FRIDAY June 13
7pm $2 THIEF video by Betsy Sussler (Nightshift Prod.)
SLEEPLESS NIGHTS video by Becky Johnson
9pm $2.50 THE JONES' film by Steve Brown, Ellie Nager, Barry Shills
TWINS film by Charlie Ahearn with Michael Smith
12: $2 JACK SMITH live in EXOTIC LANDLORDISM OF THE WORLD (theatre)
with Sinbad Glick & the Brasiere Girls of Bagdad

SATURDAY June 14
7pm $2 THIEF OF BAGDAD with Sabu (1949)
9pm $2.50 JACK SMITH live in EXOTIC LANDLORDISM OF THE WORLD
12: $2.50 JACK SMITH live in EXOTIC LANDLORDISM OF THE WORLD

SUNDAY June 15
7pm $2 STUART SHERMAN music and video
RELATIVELY TORTURED film by Willie Lenski
9pm $2.50 TERRANCE SELLERS performs
REGGAE FILM Jamaican Bands
12: Memorial Screening of ECSTATIC STIGMATIC-Gordon Stevenson
with Mirielle Cervenka

FRIDAY June 20
7pm free DREAD, BEAT & BLOOD Linton Kwesi Johnson
PEOPLE ARE RISING Third World Newsreel
BREAD AND SALT Third world Newsreel
ONLY THE BEGINNING Thirdworld Newsreel
9pm free movies until midnite (same ones as above)
12: NIGHTSHIFT THEATRE

SATURDAY June 21
7pm $2 AGAINST THE GRAIN film by Tim Burns
THE HUMAN COMMODITY film by Mindy Stevenson
9pm $2.50 Caz Porter Theatre
NO JAPS AT MY FUNERAL film by James Nares
12: NIGHTSHIFT THEATRE

SUNDAY June 22
7pm $2 PERSONAL PROBLEMS Black Soap Opera by Bill Stephens video
9pm $2.50 Live ! MARTIAL ARTS SHOW with Nathan Ingram & others
DEADLY ART OF SURVIVAL film by Charlie Ahearn with Ingram
12: $2 A BOY FROM THE CITY
TELEVISION & PHONICS video by Kenny Scarf

FRIDAY June 27
7pm $2 RAPE, RAVAGE & ROLL- UTOPIA OR ELSE live with Ilona Granet
JANE BRETTSCHNEIDER film & video
9pm $2.50 MICHAEL SMITH live Comedy
NOSFERATU film by Murnau (1922) also 1920's films:
DARE DEVILS, ELECTRICUTION, FLOODS, ASSASINATION, M.MONROE
12: $2 feature film by Jim Jarmish

SATURDAY June 28
7pm free SIDE SHOW by Nan Golden & GOD'S POLICE a film
9pm $2.50 CHRISTOF AOHLHOFER presents films
12: $2 RICK GREENWALD films

SUNDAY June 29
7pm $2 THE HAMLET OF THE SHCHIGROVSKY DISTRICT performed-Bill Garner
WONDERWOMAN Video by Dara Birnbaum
9pm $4 CLOSING NITE EXTRAVAGANZA !!! WRAPS & RAP- FASHION
THE DINELLS [illegible] live Music!
FRANKIE TEARDROP Video by Walter Robinson music by Suicide

↑ Overlooking New York's Times Square, Jane Dickson and John Ahearn's Spectacolor billboard announced "The Times Square Show" exhibition with text and a pair of animated hands playing three-card monte.

→ Sidewalk view of "The Times Square Show" with signs by Tom Otterness advertising the attraction inside, June 1980.

↗↗ "The Time Square Show" was located in an abandoned massage parlor at 41st Street and 7th Avenue. This photograph, by Lisa Kahane, was reproduced in Kim Levin's report on the show in *Art in America*.

→→ Entrance to "The Times Square Show." The window of the souvenir shop is visible above the subway entrance.

TIMES SQ. SHOW
MOVIES
LIVE SHOWS
SOUVENIR SHOP
NO

↑ "The Times Square Show," on the first floor (street level), looking out at West 41st Street.

← The cutout *Amazon Lady* figure in the lobby was contributed by the Amsterdam Theater.

↗ In the lobby on the first floor (street level), with Andrea Callard's *Ailanthus Leaves* (wall painting), Rigoberto Torres's *Man in Blue*, and John Ahearn's *Man in Red*. Ahearn and Torres had first created their cast portraits of local people in the Bronx for their exhibition "South Bronx Hall of Fame," at Fashion Moda in 1979. For "The Times Square Show," they cast portraits of passersby and visitors on the sidewalk outside of the show.

→ In the lobby on the first floor looking toward the stairwell, with Christy Rupp's rats (on the stairs) and an air-conditioning unit painted by Kenny Scharf (on the right).

VORTEXVELOCITY

← The "Money, Love and Death" room on the second floor, showing Christy Rupp's rat posters and Colen Fitzgibbon and Robin Winter's *Gun Dollar Plate* (wallpaper), Christof Kohlhofer's *Billion Dollar Bill*, Candace Hill Montgomery's *Idi Amin Plate*, Scott Miller's *Sky Falls*, Richard Mock's *Hoof-Headed Portrait*, Richard Bosman's *Three Blind Mice*, and Tom Otterness' *Man with Visible Insides*.

↓ View from the "Money, Love and Death" room into a space on the left with works by Aline Mayer and Jane Sherry, and the "News Room" on the right. On the "News Room" door are works from Jenny Holzer's *The Living Series*.

↓↓ The "Portrait Gallery" on the second floor.

THREE-CHORD ART ANYONE CAN PLAY

Richard Goldstein
Village Voice, 16 June 1980

Everything about "The Times Square Show" says "this is not an artist's space." The floor is ankle deep in sawdust and sludge. The windows are paneless and open to the street. On a ripe afternoon, damp wood and cracked plaster complete the illusion that you've wandered into a haunted house off some obscure interstate and will soon be asked to pay to see Siamese twins in a jar of formaldehyde.

The environment is overpowering and chaotic, the work crammed together injudiciously—video on fresco, performance over portraiture—very little of it signed. The art suggests a certain fondness for cheap shots: a rack of old coats painted gray, a sink overflowing with rock salt, a corridor lined with shards of glass, walls affiched with rats and dollar bills.

"Nothing is too obscure, I don't think, in this show," says John Ahearn, a sculptor, "there's no art-about-art type thing." Yet "The Times Square Show" is rampant with aesthetic notions, none more traditional at this point than the determination to make artless art. What makes the show work is the extraordinary variety of conclusions it is possible to draw from that age-old assumption. If art ought to be about something other than itself, we see how decisively the "something" depends on the artist's education and experience.

The artists were given scant instructions: to present work that comments on the Times Square environment. Among the men, a typical response is cautious and remote. "Across the street we swam to Peepland, to the live nude girls," reads the text in a Brechtian peepshow, "we put in our silver dollars and could see the girls." But the women confront the issue and seem to revel in its possibilities. Jane Sherry, who works in a woman-owned bar in the area called Tin Pan Alley, has gotten together with Aline Mayer to install a crèche of old clothes and negligees, inscribed with graffiti like "Cunt," "Whore," "Heat." Militance is everywhere—and women make up nearly half the show—but so is a reluctance to condemn the sexual response. In the lobby, Chi Chi (aka Erika Van Dam) does a classic Times Square strip. O'Keeffesque genitalia surround the working urinals.

There is a good deal of grumping—especially among the women—about work that is "politically incorrect," but no one demands that any of it be taken down. The cry to suppress offensive work may be raised when an art gallery (or film studio) excludes the opposition. This time, the artists have assured that every thesis will be accompanied by its antithesis, through the simple expedient of inviting anyone and everyone to show, and then piling the works upon each other in the indiscriminate splendor of a flea market. Mimi Gross's busts of men who died in the abortive hostage-rescue attempt seem oddly whimsical next to John Ahearn's plaster casts of South Bronx residents, printed over to look like objects in an Orozco botanica. Ann Marie Rousseau's utterly earnest portraits of homeless women in the Times Square area face an anonymous piss and enema shots. A motorized James Brown shakes against a gift-wrap screen, while a figure representing Joanne Chesimard—chicken wire on scorched bedsprings—reads a Bible open to the prayer for the dead.

Of nearly one hundred artists in the show, twelve are Latin or black, a diversity unheard of outside specially sanctioned Third World events. Most of the black artists are as hostile to minority galleries as the white artists are to alternative spaces— though for very different reasons. "I don't support apartheid in South Africa, and I won't support it here," says Joe Lewis, co-director of Fashion Moda, a fine-arts space in the South Bronx. Lewis wants access to the mainstream as much as most white artists his age (twenty-six) want out of it. For him, that means downtown, so despite "the virulent racism practiced by the art community," he shows downtown. Of the Aunt Jemima school of Punk, Lewis says, "It's their ass that's on the line, not mine." But later, while setting up a collage in broken glass, he confides, "You don't know how out you are until you're in."

"The Times Square Show" lets a certain class of artists in for the first time. Some of them have never shown except on the street—in Bobby Ganes's case, 125th Street, since the cops kicked him out of Greenwich Village. Ganes carves and varnishes chunks of wood on the terraces of his Harlem apartment. For a living, he polishes stainless steel at the World Trade Center, which is where he met Colen Fitzgibbon, an artist who earns her living programming computers. They got talking about art, and he accepted her invitation to "show on the inside" for the first time. Are there other places where an artist can take his work? he wanted to know. Can you just go up to a museum, and if they like it, do you have to pay?

There is a moment when artists who choose to show on the street are like artists who must show on the street, a point at which their aesthetics touch. David Hammons, a black artist who collects empty wine bottles and "recycles" them into shards of glittering glass ("you know, like when we brush snow on the sidewalk and it becomes a path") belongs with Christy Rupp, a white artist whose iconography of rats is meant to suggest the ecology of city life ("if rats don't survive, neither will we, because they need much less than we do"). Samo [Jean-Michel Basquiat], the graffitist, seems perfectly at home amid the poststructural scribbling on the walls. John Ahearn's South Bronx torsos do resemble botanica art, and David Wells's mock-up of James Brown does resemble a record store display. The less art becomes sanctioned, the more like art the object it imitates becomes, so that we must look again at botanica and the record store, and that double take enhances the original. [...]

Yes, folks, it's three-chord art that anyone can play, and like punk rock it aspires to be sold at a price commensurate with its value as labor. "I notice a lot of artists making things for sale," [Mimi] Gross says. "They buy the parts for $1 and sell it for $10." "The Times Square Show" has a store in the lobby, with multiples for sale—rats and pornographic fans. "It has an edge to it," Gross observes. "It's not oriented to Fiorucci." Yet.

A lot about this group reminds me of Fluxus, the legendary 1960s collective that staged guerrilla shows in storefronts and on the street. Its members settled in illegal co-ops along the neglected stretch of Lower Manhattan now known as SoHo. In the end, they were driven out, along with their founder, George Maciunas, who died hounded by the attorney general and blinded by a scuffle with the Mafia. There may be no way this new wave of artists can stick it out. Wealth beckons, and obscurity still nags. Already, Colab is talking about a collector's night, a black-tie affair at which Tom Otterness can meet Ivan Karp over wine and cheese (or dogmeat on toast?).

It may well be, as Christie Rupp suggests, that there is a moment between negligence and control, a moment of uncertainty when art flourishes. In five years, Punk may be too pornographic for Midtown West. So catch "The Times Square Show." While you can.

REPORT FROM TIMES SQUARE

Jeffrey Deitch

Art in America, September 1980

Times Square is New York's behavioral sink, the place where people go to do all the things that they can't do at home. Art appreciation does not generally fall within that category. This past June, however, the hordes of half-wild, half-crazed, and fully degenerate individuals who keep pouring out of the 42nd Street subway had occasion to check out a whole building full of art that was just as raw, raucous, trashy, and perhaps even as exciting as some of the more notorious attractions of the tenderloin. Carnival music and hawkers' chants lured the curious toward a ramshackle four-story structure on the corner of Seventh Avenue and 41st Street covered with midway signs, banners, and subway-style graffiti. A motley collection of ragged looking and aggressively fashionable characters leaned out of the open holes that had once been windows and stood talking on the sidewalk, mixing with the street people who wandered by. Those adventurous enough to ask were told they had stumbled upon the "Times Square" show, a month-long party, business enterprise, and loosely curated exhibition of art, film, fashion, and exotica.

Inside, this former bus depot and massage parlor had been transformed into a sort of art funhouse. Just beyond the door, a motorized James Brown cutout [by David Wells] danced and jerked to one of his records spinning on a plastic phonograph. To the right, a souvenir shop was stocked with all sorts of bizarre trinkets. Movies, video, or live performances were often in progress in the first-floor lobby. Those who wandered upstairs and then down to the basement were astounded by a startling variety of paintings, peep shows, sculpture, statues, model rooms, bundled clothing, and even a punching bag set up for practice.

Several dozen of the organizers, participants, and hangers-on virtually lived at the site for the show's duration. The ensuing interchange with the neighborhood, the active involvement of both blacks and whites, and the many unlikely friendships that resulted were part of the exhilarating energy that even casual visitors to the show experienced. The show itself was an illustration of that elusive process by which artists with a certain affinity somehow band together to form an unstructured but synergistic association which might almost be called a movement. [...]

Whether or not the "Times Square Show" was pre-lib or post-lib, it did represent the breakthrough of a truly postmodernist art. It proposed not just a change in imagery, or even structure, but also a change in intent. Most of the art in the show had a concrete rather than an abstract purpose—be it entertainment, sexual expression or communication of political messages. In contrast, something like pattern painting, which has been heralded as a post-modern manifestation, is really just a holding pattern for modernists in search of a new way to paint.

The show's success in breaking through the gridlock of the contemporary art marketplace demonstrates how much presentation—the "marketing"—of art works and art ideas affects their meaning and their perception by the public, and how important it is for artists to take this into their own hands. A large group show of the "Times Square" artists at an institutionalized "alternate space" wouldn't have had half the impact, and probably would have neutralized its aesthetic. The "Times Square Show" was a challenge to dealers and curators of advanced art who continue to feel that the discreet display of a few pieces in an elegant gallery is enough. But it was even more of a challenge to artists who think that their work stops when a piece leaves the studio, and who leave its presentation to others. Art must come to be marketed with the kind of imagination displayed by this exhibition's organizers—not simply in order to reach the general public, but to cut through the glut of mediocre material and touch the art audience itself. [...]

THE TIMES SQUARE SHOW

Kim Levin

Arts Magazine, September 1980

Postmodernism? "The new-fangled philistines of advancedness," railed Clement Greenberg last winter. "Born in 1978 and died in 1979," joked a cynical artist last spring, during a season of Late Modernist last stands and neo-modern revivals, a season that masked its fears with decoration and its despair with pretenses of naiveté, disguising Minimalist grids as patterns or cloaking archaistic conservativism in the myth of spontaneity. The apotheosis of Picasso to signature T-shirt status and the appearance of a war-weary German savior preaching "social sculpture" marked the antipodes of our boredom. We were ready for something else.

And just as the summer started, some of the freshest art around came slouching in off the streets—from unlikely outposts like the South Bronx and the Lower East Side—and installed itself defiantly in an abandoned massage parlor in Times Square.

The "Times Square Show" radiated genuine energy. The work of one hundred artists, it was irreverent, raw, rebellious, messy, and had the makeshift, casual, carefree air of

an amateur endeavor, as if nothing were at stake. The spirit of anarchy, exuberance, and celebration announced itself from the street: tinny carnival music blared from a loudspeaker on Seventh Avenue, setting a tone of fun-house bedlam, and the second-story windows had been removed, as if to make the exhibition accessible to the city. "Four jam-packed floors!! More than you bargained for," proclaimed a little blue Xeroxed leaflet, mimicking the media and the merchants, and mocking the art-world.

Inside, every space and surface of the dilapidated four-story structure was utilized and transformed. There was art in the dank basement and in the stairwells, in toilets and closets. It was painted onto electrical switches and telephone wires, sprouting from urinals, hanging from corridor ceilings, lurking in odd corners. Look out a window and you might see a tiny cabin lashed to an air vent. Venture into the depths of the cellar to find a gauzy Ghost haunted by memories of classical sculpture. Not far away a crudely outlined human figure sprawled across the floor and up a wall, while a pattern of white footprints paced the gritty floor and the whitewashed ceiling was covered with black handprints. The figure seemed to be inscribing itself in a circle with a stick and its crooked legs appeared straight when you stood in another circle marked out on the floor. Was it a magic cave painting or a perceptual puzzle? Leonardo's measure of man or a measured illusion of two dimensions and three? A reinvention of fixed- point perspective, a comment on boundaries, or the declaration of a weird new humanism?

There was so much art you could hardly tell where one piece left off and another began. There were walls papered with patterns of dollar bills, guns, and dinner plates like Warhol's wallpaper, with a border of rats running around the floorboard. Graffiti-like narrative artworks scrawled on the walls coexisted with a stairwell of genuine subway graffiti by Samo [Jean-Michel Basquiat] and a blackboard of spectator comments. Stairways were ornamented with plastic ruffles, cheap flowered fabric, and Xmas lights as if to go straight to the source of decorative art, and one of the messages on the wall declared "Fashion as Shield." There were macho drawings, comic-book melodramas, and feminist tableaus, and mirrors scattered throughout the building were emblazoned with the lipsticked words: "women—take back the night." There was a Portrait Gallery and an Open Air Fashion Lounge, and a gift shop with cheap art and free giveaways. And if you were there at the right time, there were video works, performances, dance events.

Like Schwitters' Merzbau, the building was a total environment, but it was inner-city art, an art of plastic and rags, broken glass and garbage, celebrating squalor and urban decay. Like the opening show at P.S.1 a few years ago, where the art and the architectural decay of the old schoolhouse were sometimes indistinguishable, this was art that merged with its surroundings, melting into its sleazy Times Square context like camouflage. In retrospect, the P.S. 1 art was smart. This show, subverting the gallery system, played dumb: the exhibition space was like an amusement arcade, containing art that couldn't be defaced because it embodied defacement, incorporated the debris of an over-ripe city, embraced TV inanity, 42nd Street come-ons, and other assaults. It was an environment in which somehow the tree limbs studded with marbles by Willie Neal, a street artist, seemed more relevant as art than Mimi Gross' shelf of neo-constructivist planar faces.

While artists have been talking within the art world about accessibility and context and content, about alternate spaces and temporal art, a newer generation—like an unexpected mutation—had gone farther, creating a collective and semi-anonymous, inclusive not exclusive, social and anti-social art outside the environs of the art world. While critics have been disputing the survival of art, an aggressive delinquent style emerged that has mastered the art of self-defense. It was truly accessible to the public. One day there was an exuberant streetwise youth unleashing excess energy on a punching-bag artwork. The next day a local bum asleep on an old plastic couch—across from two futuristic mannikins on a science-fiction chair—became part of the show. And the mannikins had changed position from the day before. [...]

It wasn't so much that the individual artworks were radically new, but that the whole was more than the sum of its parts. The context created a new sensibility, a collective statement.

The history of art in our century can be seen as an inexorable march toward abstraction and reduction, but it can also be seen as a series of efforts at incorporating the realities of modern life into art, with each new movement claiming to capture a more essential aspect of reality than the one before. Each was an effort to bridge some gap between life and art. And if we look at it this way—if the "Times Square Show" presents the newest realism—modern art has come full circle, for New Wave art exults not in progress but in its littered aftermath, and thus relegates the modernist dreams of a utopian future to the past.

Perhaps the events of last season can be fitted neatly together after all: at the start of the 1980s, Picasso and modernism were admitted into public heaven, a born-again Beuys emerged from hell with modernist visions of a future in which everyone would be an artist, and in the wake of a flood of escapist surface decoration and archaizing fantasy art the grim realities of the present—the entropic metropolis and the aftermath of progress—have been shown to contain the most vital signs of life, absorbed into the vocabulary of the most accessible, alienated, and artless new art as if to demonstrate that everybody already is an artist. People used to look at a Picasso and say their three year old could do better. In the "Times Square Show" the hand writing is on the wall, declaring "I am not an alien," or " Atoms can be fun." It's like a Last Judgment. Or the ultimate stopgap.

Apostles of destruction or harbingers of a brave new world? And we are left to wonder whet her New Wave art is proto-millennial fin-de-siècle depravity or the second coming of early modernism, or if the postmodern salvage [of] art we've been anticipating is already here, unexpectedly making its debut in derelict guise, swathed, as it were, in rags.

JACK SMITH, "EXOTIC LANDLORDISM OF THE WORLD," TIMES SQUARE SHOW

J. Hoberman
Artforum, September 1980

The inclusion of Jack Smith in the "Times Square Show" may be a tribute to his capacity for inspiring successive waves of New York artists, but the three performances he gave were proof of his ability to alienate even sympathetic audiences. From the underground filmmakers of the early 1960s through Warhol to the Playhouse of the Ridiculous and beyond into performance and punk, Smith has been a tangible influence. As a subterranean artistic force and an eccentric personality, he is the closest thing we have to an American Alfred Jarry. Smith makes no distinction between his life and his art and his subject has often been the failure of both. He typically gives his most sublime performances to near-empty houses and the "Times Square Show" gave him more visibility than he has had in years. The almost predictable result was that Smith precipitated a bewildering degree of chaos and artlessness into an environment dedicated to both.

The initial midnight performance of *Exotic Landlordism of the World* was packed to overflowing. The audience sat listening to a tape of kitschy "tropical" mood music, staring at an impoverished set (two lamps, a hanging sheet, a drape made from a plastic poncho), while the Brassiere Girls of Baghdad—a pair of garishly punk belly dancers—cajoled them to part with the requisite four dollars. It was 1:30 a.m. before Smith descended the stairs at the rear of the performance space, wrapped in a burnoose and carrying a container of coffee. He was joined by another dancer, Coral Ups, and a Brassiere Boy, called Steve Adore, whose spectacular costume—a blue and silver loincloth and plush pillow bikini—might have been fashioned from a couch in the Fontainebleau lobby.

Smith's performances are often "rehearsals" pushed so far beyond the limits of endurance that they come to seem like quasi-religious rites. "I don't ask people to act. It should be more like reacting to stimuli," he once told an interviewer, while a press release for a never-performed work declared that "memorized speech is possibly the least dramatic thing that can happen on the stage... So it was with *Exotic Landlordism.* After converting his coffee container into an incense burner, Smith rummaged around in a plastic shopping bag and finally produced a hefty manuscript. The bag was marked "Trick or Treat," but this performance was not going to be the latter. Smith's usual strategy—handing his performers an unfamiliar script and directing their reading of it on stage—was soon torpedoed by the crass heckling of the obstreperous Brassiere Girls. His initial indulgence soon turned into vague embarrassment, and after a while he retreated upstairs. At this, the B-girls and the two other performers burst into an energetically lewd display of free-form dancing, grabbing artworks from the show to use as props. The utter breakdown of the piece was sad and frightening. [...]

SEX AND DEATH AND SHOCK AND SCHLOCK

Anne Ominous (Lucy R. Lippard)
Artforum, October 1980

Overheard in downtown art territory: "Have you seen The Times Square Show?" "Not yet, but I hear it's the best thing around." "That's not what I heard."

THE SHOW

Well, by now everybody's heard something about "The Times Square Show"—a sleazy, artist-organized extravaganza in a deteriorating former massage parlor on 41st street and 7th Avenue in New York City. Abundant press coverage has been as contradictory as the show itself. Word of mouth to mouth has often been tongue in cheek. What makes TTSS noteworthy, no matter what one thinks of the art in it, is the levels it offers. TTSS is an organizational feat—an object lesson in object-organizing by artists. It is a weird kind of cultural colonization that worked because colonizers and colonized had something in common, an exhibition of "unsalable" works accompanied by a gifte shoppe that managed to sell just such works—cheap; a constantly changing panorama of aesthetic neuroses; a performance and film festival; a throwback to the early 1960s happenings-and-storefront syndrome; a sunny apotheosis of shady sexism; a cry of rage against current art-worldiness and a ghastly glance into the future of art. It's also a lot of knives and guns and money and dirt and cocks and cunts and blood and gore housed in four wrecked floors (plus basement) donated by the organizers, by the landlord. [...]

The studied crudity that is so much a part of TTSS is also a part of the pervasive level of political naiveté. Whether self-consciously critical or manipulative or innocent or consciously critical, it is the cutting-edge these mostly young artists are looking for (in sex as well as art and politics, it seems: one participant suggested that the best review of the show might be from an informed psychosexual viewpoint). I keep coming back to the way "politics" floats so politely in this iconoclastic but still "art" context. I've complained before about the assumption that style alone (as opposed to image) can make a political statement—the idea that badly printed photos and harsh tabloid graphics attached to no matter what kind of irresponsible or undigested imagery is "political." And after three years of the "punk" posters that paper SoHo, Tribeca, and the Lower East Side, I'm getting sick of all the guns and skulls and racist-sexist slurs. (The latest is something about "Japs" and was included in TTSS events; it is presumably by someone for whom World War II only existed in the comic strips.) Even though these posters are often witty and eye-catching and an improvement on the Hallmark variety, it doesn't seem to me that the world situation is such that games around war and killing and race and hatred are very funny. (Maybe it's just gallows humor, or shallows, or callow humor?) I'm angered that the urgency of so much of this art, in and out of TTSS, is being wasted on superficial fantasies—which is why Times Square is a sadly apt location. [...]

13

EXHIBITION

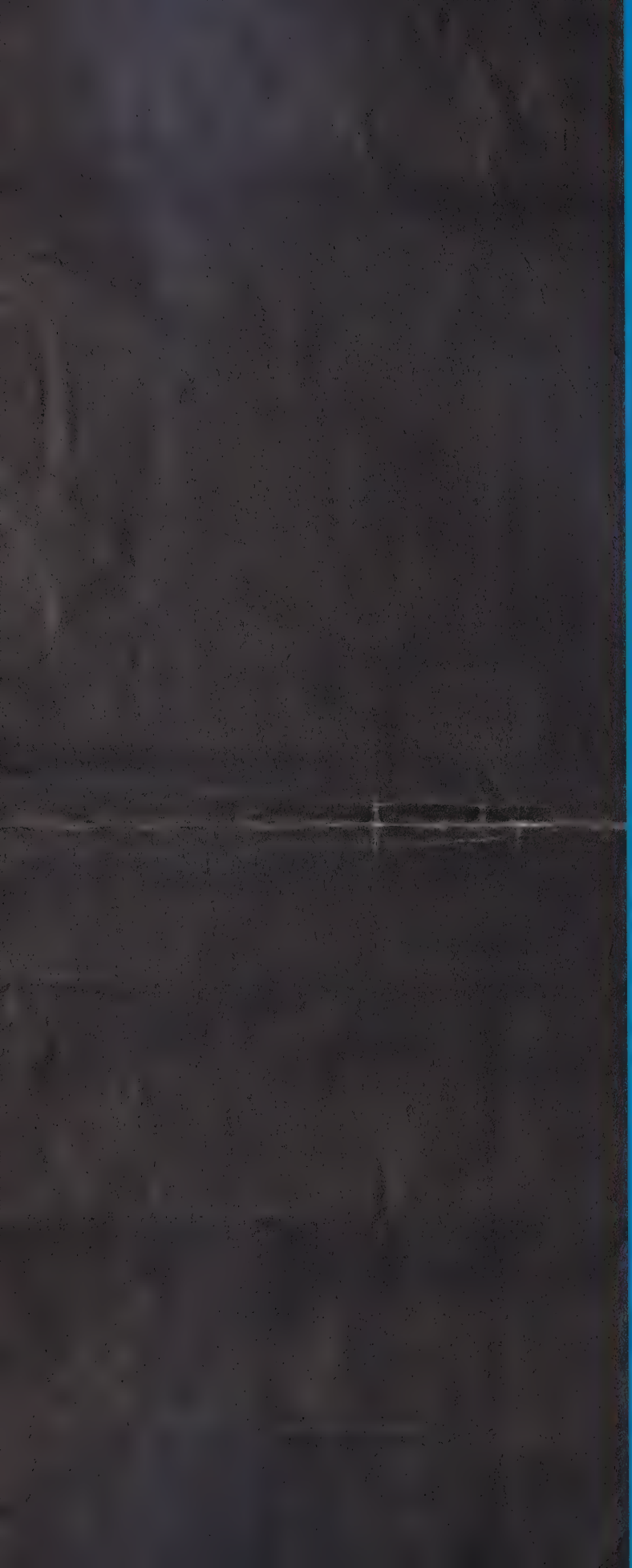
A New Spirit in Painting

LOCATION

Royal Academy of Arts, London

DATE

15 January–18 March 1981



CURATORS
Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal (Exhibitions Secretary, Royal College of Arts), Nicholas Serota

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Balthus, Georg Baselitz, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Alan Charlton, Sandro Chia, Rainer Fetting, Lucian Freud, Gotthard Graubner, Philip Guston, Dieter Hacker, Jean Hélion, David Hockney, Howard Hodgkin, K. H. Hödicke, Anselm Kiefer, Per Kirkeby, R. B. Kitaj, Bernd Koberling, Willem de Kooning, Jannis Kounellis, Markus Lüpertz, Brice Marden, Matta, Bruce McLean, Mario Merz, Malcolm Morley, Mimmo Paladino, A. R. Penck, Pablo Picasso, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Robert Ryman, Julian Schnabel, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol

EXHIBITION CATALOG
A New Spirit in Painting. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1981. With texts by Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal, and Nicholas Serota.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 38
Number of artworks: 150–200
Total attendance: 80,753

"A New Spirit in Painting" both announced something new and championed something old. The new was a kind of painting, variously identified as Neue Wilde in Germany, Transavanguardia in Italy, and Neo-Expressionism in the United States. The old was painting itself, which during the 1970s had received less international attention than photography, video, performance, and non-traditional sculpture. Countering the view that painting was an anachronism, the exhibition sought to highlight its current vitality.

The show was co-curated by Norman Rosenthal of the Royal Academy, Nicholas Serota of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, and Berlin art critic Christos Joachimides. Assembling the exhibition in less than a year to fill a gap in the Royal Academy schedule, the curators selected the work of thirty-eight artists, all men. The largest number, eleven, were from Germany, a center of Expressionist figurative painting. (The show received financial support from the governments of West Germany and Berlin.) Of the other artists, nine came from the United States, eight from Great Britain, five from Italy, four from France, and one from Denmark. All of the paintings had been created within the previous ten years.

The artists belonged to three generations. Picasso, who had died in 1973, presided over the show as éminence grise, with four paintings made in 1971-72 from a body of work that would greatly influence young painters. He was joined by six other elders, most of them painting with an emotional intensity that the curators contrasted with the cool art of the previous decade. By far the largest group in the exhibition had come of age in the late 1950s and 1960s, and it included international luminaries as well as painters of strong reputation but less market visibility, along with a few artists who had only recently taken up painting. For an exhibition remembered as introducing on the international stage the young Neo-Expressionist painters of the 1980s, there were only six artists born after World War II.

The catalog positioned the show as a manifesto. Following a period when painting was said to be dead, the exhibition proclaimed it as a central and dynamic medium. The show also argued for a renewal of figuration and identifiable imagery expressing the emotions and subjective vision of the artist. Joachimides extolled this as a return to traditional values of personal accountability and individual creativity. But there was another narrative implicit in "A New Spirit in Painting," a subtext of cultural politics. In asserting that European Expressionist painting was at the forefront of contemporary art, the exhibition suggested a shift of the center of momentum across the Atlantic from New York. Of the younger artists in the show, only Julian Schnabel was American.

This point was made even more clearly the next year, when Rosenthal and Joachimides curated the larger exhibition "Zeitgeist" in Berlin. A show of almost two hundred-and-fifty paintings and sculptures, it featured Joseph Beuys' huge installation *Stag Monuments* and a massive artists' commission in the two-story atrium of the Walter-Gropius-Bau. There four 13 x 10-foot (4 x 3-meter) paintings by each of eight artists declared the ascension of emotionally expressive art. Just one of these commissions went to an American, David Salle.

Cultural politics of another kind surfaced in "Zeitgeist," which included work by only a single woman, Susan Rothenberg, one more woman than had been selected for "A New Spirit in Painting." Along with the growth of Expressionist art making, the 1980s would see increasing dissent over such exclusion, with protest surfacing loudly in 1984 in New York at the Museum of Modern Art's ambitious "International Survey of Painting and Sculpture."

This way up for upside down painting

AT LEAST one art lover used his head when it came to viewing an Upside Down painting yesterday.

Fortunately, no slipped discs were reported as hundreds of visitors at a Royal Academy preview twisted and turned to appreciate four works by German artist Georg Baselitz.

The artist's nude models have their feet firmly on the ground, and it is the artist himself who comes near to slipping a disc by painting upside down.

The exhibition featuring this breakthrough is at Burlington House, London. Called "New Spirit in Painting," it has 150 works by 38 contemporary artists and opens to the public tomorrow.

Confronted

The introduction in the monumental £6·25 catalogue says: "Great painting is being produced today and we have every reason to think that this will continue. But it is only in an exhibition such as this that such assertions can be tested."

It will be up to visitors to judge when they are confronted for their £2 admission price by such works as a whole (admittedly small) room devoted to peevish kindergarten scrawls by Cy Twombley, entitled "Bacchanalia."

Story:
JOHN RYDON

Picture:
HILARIA McCARTHY

I see . . . one visitor's view at the exhibition yesterday

↑ The poster for the exhibition, which featured Malcolm Morley's colorful depiction of parrots.

↗↗ A number of British tabloids reported on the exhibition with photographs of befuddled visitors attempting to view Georg Baselitz's works "the right way up." This report comes from *The Daily Express*, 14 January 1981.

↗ An invitation to a dinner at the London zoo, held on 14 January 1981 to celebrate the opening of the exhibition.

→ An invitation to a private view of the exhibition on 12 February 1981, intended to raise funds for the cash-strapped Royal Academy. The title of the show is incorrectly given as "The New Spirit in Painting."

← A cartoon from *Punch* responding to the exhibition "A New Spirit in Painting."

Norman Rosenthal, Christos Joachimides and Nicholas Serota

request the pleasure of your company

at a dinner at the London Zoo

on Wednesday 14 January

to celebrate the opening of the exhibition

A NEW SPIRIT IN PAINTING

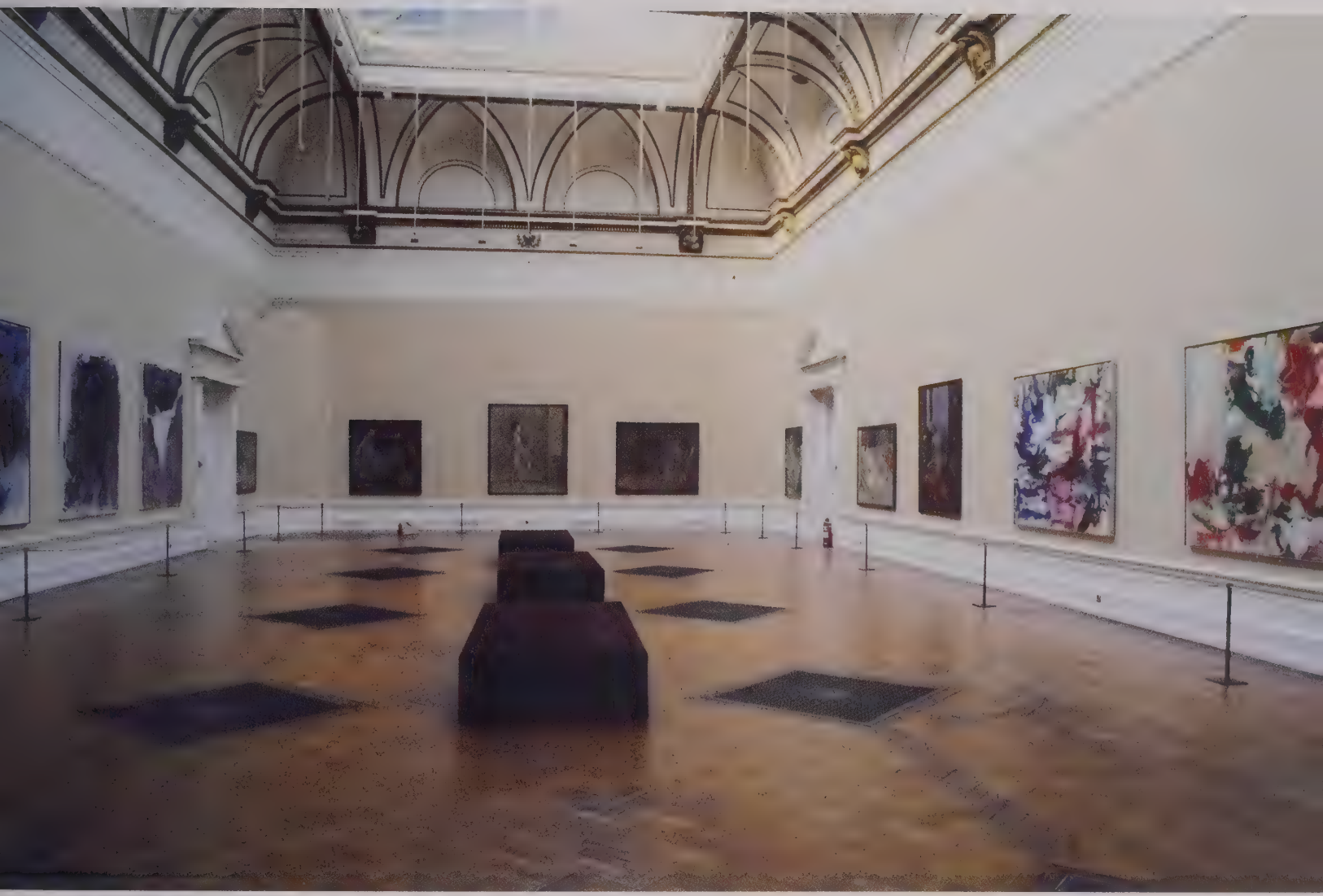
8pm Drinks in the Aquarium
9pm Dinner in the Members Restaurant

Members Entrance
London Zoo
Outer Circle
Regents Park

[redacted]

THE BRITISH FRIENDS OF BETH HATEFUTSOTH
invite you to a
PRIVATE VIEW
of
'The New Spirit in Painting'
at the
Royal Academy of Arts
Burlington House
Piccadilly
on
Thursday, 12 February 1981

6.30-9.00pm Buffet Supper Donation: £15



↑ View of a gallery at the Royal Academy showing works by Georg Baselitz (left), Balthus (at the far end), and Willem de Kooning (right).

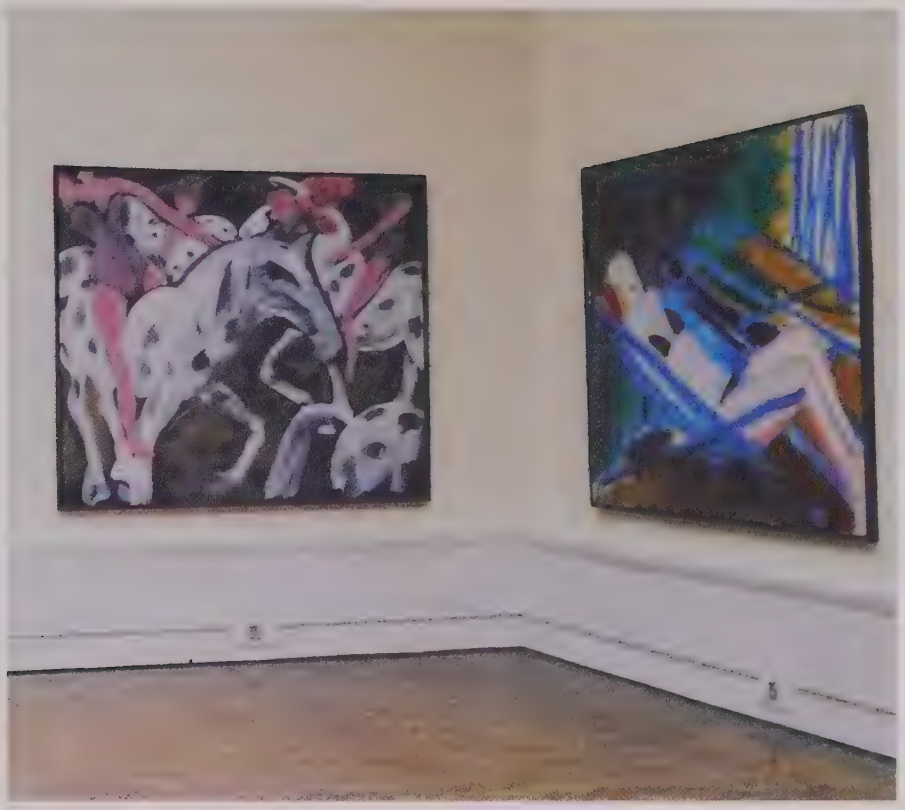
← View of the galleries at the Royal Academy. To the left of the door is a work by Per Kirkeby, and to the right one by R. B. Kitaj. Through the door in the next room are paintings by Jannis Kounellis and Robert Ryman, with a work by Mario Merz glimpsed in the far room.

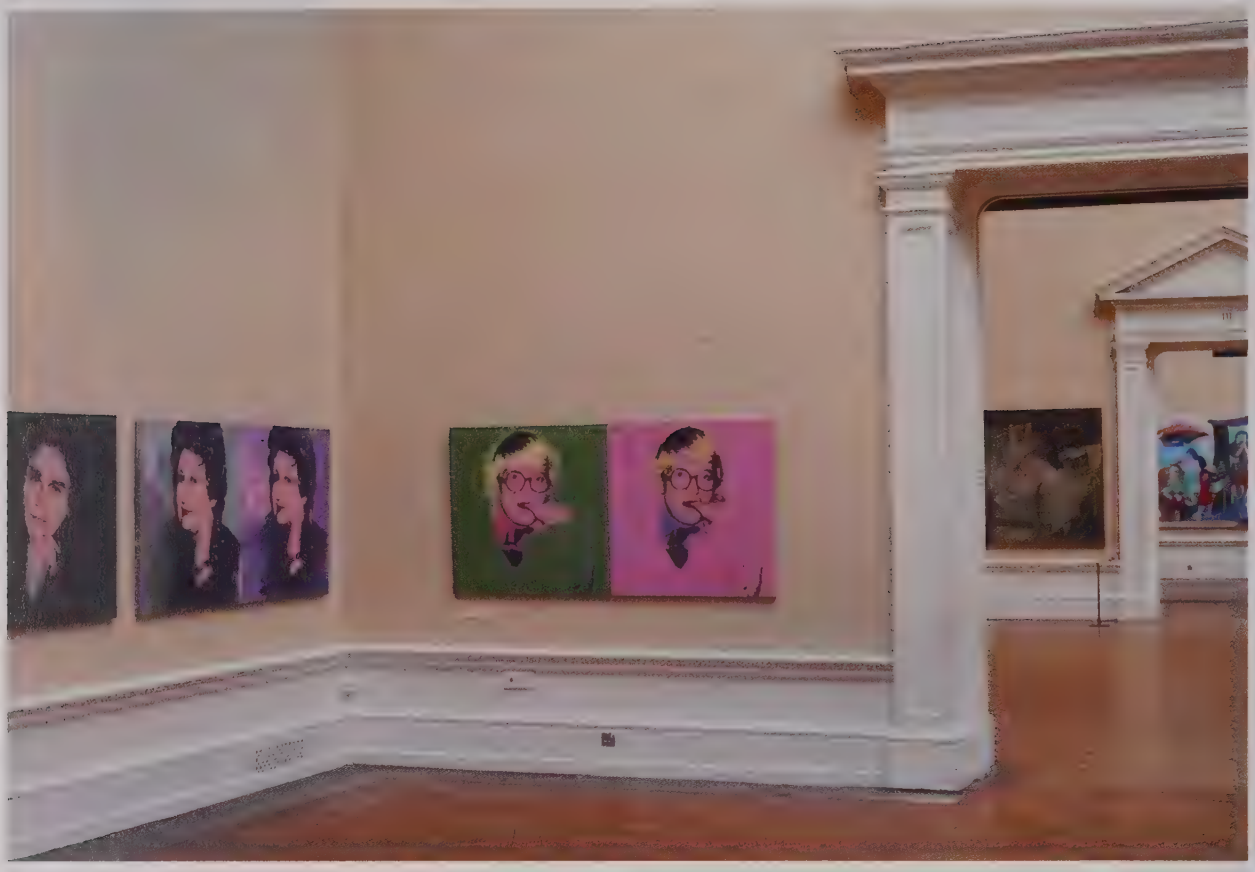
↙ Through the door on the left are paintings by Jannis Kounellis, and on the wall to the right are works by Markus Lüpertz.

→ Two works by K. H. Hödicke, *Dapple Greys* and *Deckchair*.

↓ Two works by Georg Baselitz, *Male Figure with Wings* and *Eagle*.

↘ Julian Schnabel's *St. Francis in Ecstasy*. A relatively unknown artist at the time, Schnabel was the youngest artist in the exhibition.





^ To the left are six works by Andy Warhol, including a double portrait of David Hockney, who also contributed work to the exhibition. In the next room is a painting by Balthus, with a work by Jean Helion in the farthest room.

→ Paintings by Malcolm Morley, including *The Lone Ranger Lost in The Jungle of Erotic Desires* and (on the far right) the *Parrots* painting that was used on the exhibition's poster.

PREFACE

Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal, Nicholas Serota
A New Spirit in Painting (exh. cat.)

We are in a period when it seems to many people that painting has lost its relevance as one of the highest and most eloquent forms of artistic expression. It is argued that it has become academic and repetitive and it has the capacity neither for technical mastery nor for originality. It seems to speak neither to other artists nor to a wide audience. However, the three organizers of this exhibition feel strongly that the art of painting, whose recent history and development is far more complex and rich than has been generally acknowledged, is in fact flourishing. Great painting is being produced today and we have every reason to think that this will continue. But it is only in an exhibition such as this that such assertions can be tested.

"A New Spirit in Painting" is an exhibition of the work of thirty-eight painters. The choice is not arbitrary, but represents a critical stance. The artists can be said to belong roughly speaking to three generations. The principal group is the generation that came to the attention of the world of painting largely during the 1960s, and the painters we have chosen are those whose work today still seems vital, full of expression, and devoid of mannerism. Younger painters hardly known to the general public are also included in the exhibition. Their work seems to hold the greatest promise of the many younger artists whose work we have seen, though the selection is meant not as a prophecy, but rather as an assessment of the present. We have also included in the exhibition the work of six older painters. Their work is presented here much more fully than originally anticipated, just because it seemed to us that their painting was so outstanding that it needed precisely in this context to be presented in depth. These six painters are Francis Bacon, Balthus, Philip Guston, Jean Helion, Willem de Kooning, and Matta. Whilst all six of these painters are acknowledged to be considerable artists, they have seemed to stand outside a general evaluation of painting today. They have been regarded rather as outstanding survivals, with little to contribute to painting now. But we feel that these old painters are great artists of today, whose work has real affinities with the younger painters we have selected for this exhibition. These affinities have as much to do with intensity and an obsessive interest in what painting can communicate as with direct stylistic comparisons.

A group exhibition is by its very nature an anthology. But it can also achieve much more, for exhibitions introduce the concept of time into the process of looking at pictures. Both in the individual and in the group exhibition, paintings should enrich each other and evoke a wider range of association for the visitor than might be apparent in the perception of a single work. The exhibition thus becomes almost an artwork in itself. This exhibition has in our eyes a program. It is meant both as a manifesto and as a reflection on the state of painting now. However, before examining this state it is necessary to say something about the historical background to the task we have set ourselves.

The current orthodoxies about painting were defined as long ago as the 1950s by American critics and achieved almost universal acceptance during the following decades. These orthodoxies, which had some but by no means complete validity, aggressively proclaimed the work that was produced in and around New York to be virtually the only universally acceptable art—anything else was at best provincial. The claims made for New York were even more extreme than those that had been made on behalf of Paris over the preceding two hundred years. The great American painters of the 1940s and 1950s, Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko, Newman, it was said, had given painting a scale appropriate to the "great new world" that had given it birth. Such painters were regarded the true successors to the European art movements Cubism and Surrealism. In this reading of art history, they were followed by other outstanding "American" movements: Pop, Photorealism, Minimal painting.

Since that time, that is during the 1970s, painting has continued to lose ground as "newer" means such as photography, video, performance, and environments began to dominate the great international exhibitions of contemporary art held in the United States and Europe. Surprisingly it really does seem that the last exhibition anywhere in the world to look at painting from an international perspective was held in London at the Tate Gallery in 1964, when Alan Bowness, Lawrence Gowing, and Philip James organized a successful and important show, "54–64: Painting and Sculpture of a Decade." [...]

Omissions we feel are justified in the context of an exhibition that suggests so many different possibilities, so many different approaches, both of subject and of the manner of painting. There are outstanding non-figurative paintings in our exhibition. However, it is surely unthinkable that the representation of human experiences, in other words people and their emotions, landscapes, and still lifes, could forever be excluded from painting. They must in the long run again return to the center of the argument of painting. This is a central proposition of this exhibition. [...]

A NEW SPIRIT IN PAINTING

Christos M. Joachimides
A New Spirit in Painting (exh. cat.)

The artists' studios are full of paint pots again and an abandoned easel in an art school has become a rare sight. Wherever you look in Europe or America you find artists who have rediscovered the sheer joy of painting. In the studios, in the cafés and bars, wherever artists or students gather, you hear passionate debates and arguments about painting. In short, artists are involved in painting again, it has become crucial to them, and this new consciousness of the contemporary significance of the oldest form of their art is in the air, tangibly, wherever art is being made.

This new concern with painting is related to a certain subjective vision, a vision that includes both an understanding of the artist himself as an individual engaged in a search for self-realization and as an actor on the wider historical stage. The subjective view, the creative imagination, has come back into

its own and is evident in a new approach to painting. Artists, no longer satisfied with the deliberately objective view, are beginning to respond to their environment, allowing these reactions to be expressed in the form of images. We are confronted with an art that tells us about their personal relationships and personal worlds.

This is a need, of course, that goes far beyond the boundaries of art to permeate all levels of society. It is the need to talk about oneself, to express one's own desires and fears, to react to daily life, indeed to reactivate areas of experience that have long lain dormant. A reinterest in the significance of the private life shows signs of emerging everywhere, and in art it takes the form of a conspicuous subjectiveness.

This need to test and plumb individual experience, this rediscovery of the private, are by no means fortuitous. The optimistic belief, so widespread in the 1960s, that the ills of society could be quickly rectified through sufficiently active personal commitment, did not last long into the 1970s; the oil crisis and the threat to material well-being it ushered in led to widespread feelings of resignation and mistrust. The more insecure one's material future seemed, the more inviting became the comforts of the imagination. A period of insight gave way to a period of self-examination.

In art, too, the extrovert 1960s were followed in the next decade by a contemplative inward-looking view, an art-about-art that its proponents considered the latest emanation of the avant-garde spirit. They were supported in this view by what can only be called a popular fairy tale. The discovery of photography, so the story goes, gave the coup de grace to figurative painting, and the moral of the story, as historians of modern art were not slow to point out, is that art has developed linearly, progressively from Cézanne through Cubism and Mondrian to, say, Ad Reinhardt or Minimalism.

This grave error has had serious consequences for the understanding of painting during most of the 1970s. The overemphasis on the idea of autonomy in art, which brought about Minimalism and its extreme appendix Conceptual art, was bound to be self-defeating. Soon the avant-garde of 1970s, with its narrow, puritan approach devoid of all joy in the senses, lost its creative impetus and began to stagnate.

The reaction to such a thoroughgoing prohibition on subjective experience, to the exclusion of sensuality and pathos from art, came as a surprise only to those who saw Minimalism and its offshoots as the culmination of art history. It was not long before it again became clear that the development of art is not characterized simply by linear progress. The path art has taken from earliest times is anything but smooth; it is full of surprising mutations and unexpected contradictions that only reveal their meaning for the whole in their particular dialectic context. And this is as true of an historic epoch as it is of the development of an individual artist's work—a realization, by the way, that is barely novel in the history of ideas.

The reaction I am speaking of came neither all at once nor entirely unexpectedly, however. Since painting was, and in many circles still is, regarded as an absolute anachronism, the work that has been done by a number of major artists over the past two decades might best be understood as a partisan art, an underground battle against the official norm. When a "rebel" like Balthus insists on his right to realize his grandiose obsessions on canvas and thereby to his own very private visions, he carries through something that has long being ignored in art—the right of the artist, and not only the artist, to define himself as an individual. And when Georg Baselitz, at the threshold of the past decade, decided to turn his subjects and with them reality on their head, he not only liberated himself from the bonds of a traditional conception of painting but took up, by this affront, a position of resistance within the context of art. This is an attitude that, at a certain moment, can have important consequences.

Our times, wherever you look, are pervaded by a reassessment of traditional values. Even the simple act of planting and harvesting by traditional methods in a rural commune takes on a certain political significance, becomes an act of resistance, when seen against the ongoing destruction of nature and its products. This exhibition presents a position in art that conspicuously asserts traditional values, such as individual creativity, accountability, quality, which throw light on the condition of contemporary art and, by association, on the society in which it is produced. Thus for all its apparent conservatism, the art on show here is, in the true sense, progressive. Consciously or instinctively, then, painters are turning back to traditional concerns. No matter how tenuous and wraithlike, figures, landscapes, and objects are present in all of these paintings; none is without at least a rudiment of meaning. For the artist, each work is an attempt to come to terms with the implications of his activity, something a painter can achieve only through images.

The exhibition "A New Spirit in Painting" is a testimony to the state of painting as it seemed to three observers at the onset of the 1980s. We hope that this personal view can assist the formulation of an objective judgment. The current state of painting may seem at first complex and confusing. However, a closer examination discloses certain affinities between the apparently diverse strands that constitute painting today. [...]

AUDACIOUS, OUTSPOKEN—A SPUR FOR THINGS TO COME

Richard Cork

The New Standard, 15 January 1981

"A New Spirit in Painting": the title resounds from the Royal Academy's winter exhibition like a clarion call heralding the advent of Spring. It immediately suggests that a fresh generation of artists has emerged, along with the 1980s, to revitalize a tradition that a decade ago seemed in decline.

High hopes are, therefore, aroused [...] Does the Academy's courageous optimism over their show turn out to be justified? On balance, my answer is an enthusiastic "yes." But it only succeeds in an unexpected sense, which fails to fulfill the promise apparently given by its stirring title.

The younger artists presented here offer no overwhelming proof of their ability to rejuvenate the painting tradition. Instead, it is the senior and middle-aged painters who really do convey outspoken imaginative intensity. [...]

Taken as a whole, the brooding German presence in this survey forces us to acknowledge the continuing potency of the Expressionist tradition, which is too often ignored by historians and critics of modern art.

It is a pity that none of the young painters at the Academy possesses a talent anywhere near as momentous as Picasso, who at their age was immersed in the Cubist revolution. And the number of exhibitors who use film, performance, and alternatives alongside their paintings—Merz, Penck, McLean, Fetting, Hacker, and Kirkeby among them—indicate that paint on canvas need no longer be regarded as an exclusive preoccupation.

I am glad that this absorbing exhibition, unlike the 1980 Hayward Annual, does not maintain that painting is the only true "high art." But I also recognize that the Academy survey convincingly shows how older painters of different persuasions are working with a vitality and power that may, with luck, help a future generation to bring about a rebirth comparable with the finest painting in the past.

COLD TURKEY: A NEW SPIRIT IN PAINTING AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON

Stuart Morgan

Artforum, April 1981

A woman decides to hold a dinner party and hires a maid to wait on the table. All goes well until the servant steps into the room carrying a huge turkey, trips, and drops it on the carpet. "Blanche," says the hostess, her voice quivering, "take that away and bring in the other turkey." "A New Spirit in Painting" isn't just a turkey—it's the same old turkey dusted off and disguised. Cold, mangled, and covered with fluff, it may stick in our throats, but the day is saved—any turkey is better than no turkey at all. Unless, of course, you prefer the truth. The most provocative part of "A New Spirit" is the word "new"; every major point in the catalog text has been made before, and the average age of the artists is fifty. By London standards, this is a very large, very expensive show indeed, and publicity for it has been unusually immodest. Unfortunately, magnitude of size has led to a loss of coherence. "A New Spirit" is a chance to think about the possibilities of painting; it is a clarion call to born-again painters, an attempt to consolidate some current critical stances and a ratification or revision of existing traditions. Inside it are entire sub-exhibitions trying to get out—for instance, a survey of contemporary German painting and a group of late modern masters. Altogether, it is synthetic, symptomatic, even representative. Not "new."

The selectors seem to disagree. Christos Joachimides writes, "This exhibition presents a position in art which conspicuously asserts traditional values such as individual creativity, accountability, quality, which throw light on the condition of contemporary art and, by association, on the society in which it is produced." Wait for the catch. "Thus, for all its apparent conservatism the art on show here is, in a true sense, progessive." Britain, a country with extraordinary continuity in its cultural history, is easily fooled by such paradoxes. But "backwards equals forwards" isn't a paradox; it's an untruth. Any major public display of this kind demands an accompanying statement, and, to paraphrase Pound, exhibitions should be at least as well organized as critical essays. Here, theory is replaced by appeals to traditional aesthetic uplift. It is the last straw when Joachimides recommends a recapitulation and then claims that this will renew the avant-garde.

According to the selectors, "A New Spirit" is a manifesto but not a prophecy, an "area for assertions to be tested" and "a reflection on the state of painting now"—an anthology and an artwork in its own right. The main confusion is between description and prescription. Why are the paintings there? Are they slides for a lecture or counters in a Leavisite power struggle? Why is New Image painting banished, or at least restricted? Why is pattern painting ignored completely? Why drag in performance artist Bruce McLean or Jannis Kounellis just to prove a point about the flexibility of the medium, while conceptualists engaged in examining the philosophy of painting (such as Michael Craig-Martin) are omitted to the detriment of the show and its argument? Why, above all, does the British section exclude John Walker, the single artist in the country whose entire output for the last ten years is relevant to the matter at hand?

One thing is clear. "The New Spirit" was intended to make exciting juxtapositions and propose new historical relationships. Its failure to do both can be attributed to a scattershot thesis, and to the nature and brevity of the catalog texts. Yet it is just possible to spot connections without knowing whether they were deliberate. It is like imagining a small city block where by chance Frank Auerbach and Willem de Kooning are neighbors. Hockney and Warhol might also live near each other. At times they pop upstairs to de Kooning's to borrow a cup of sugar. Balthus and Kitaj talk politely from time to time in the elevator, united by a distant family relationship. The minimalists would keep themselves to themselves: the landlord rented them an apartment but no one knows why. One of the mysteries of "The New Spirit" is why all these artists are hung together. Gotthard Graubner seems to draw on the German Romantic tradition; while projecting the warmth of a physical presence, his stuffed canvases heave with the Sehnsucht of overweight contraltos. Alan Charlton is site-specific, dividing and inflecting the space he finds. Robert Ryman is an inventor determined to begin again as if no one has ever made paintings before, conscious of the fact that after thirty years he may only have redesigned the wheel. Are imageless paintings included as an indictment of the bankruptcy of means? At the boundaries of the tradition of abstract formalism, Brice Marden should qualify as a key figure in any debate surrounding "The New Spirit." There is no clue that he has been singled out, though two recent works are included. On the subject of abstraction

in general, it is difficult to piece together an argument. The importance of German Expressionism is hammered home, but the fate of Abstract Expressionism is less easy to discern. Philip Guston's change of heart, and an aspect of late de Kooning, hardly provide material for an answer. But we can see A. R. Penck's vast hieroglyphics recall early Adolph Gottlieb and David Smith's drawings. Someone in Sweden must be writing a scholarly article about Per Kirkeby and his connection to the New York School. Kirkeby is that art-historical rarity, the artist who revives a defunct movement and kills it off again almost immediately. In his case he does it in the same painting. Mimmo Paladino's *Rosso Silenzioso*—it sounds better in Italian—has me completely foxed; it is either a deep and moving cry from the unconscious or a piece of flimflam too silly even to hang on the wall.

Abstract Expressionism, then, seems to have vanished or been abandoned, though there are whiffs of it here and there. In the United States it may be difficult to mount a major show that is optimistic about the future of painting without constant reference to the 1950s. (Barbara Rose's "American Painting: The Eighties" is a good example.) But in Britain an unbroken line of realist art, which Kitaj calls School of London, can be used as a spine. The main figures are represented here: Bacon, Hockney, Kitaj himself, Auerbach, and Lucian Freud.

The link between the three major groups represented—the British realists, the German Neo-Expressionists, and America in the 1960s—remains a secret. [...]

FRESH PAINT

Roberta Smith

Art in America, Summer 1981

The Royal Academy's "New Spirit in Painting" was an exhibition the London art world mostly loved to hate. Drastically flawed, pretentious, and arrogantly wrong-headed, it was nonetheless ambitious fare, an exhibition you could sink your teeth into, rip to shreds, and still have plenty left over to digest. The show was as inspiring as it was infuriating, good, rotten, and indifferent, depending upon how you looked at it.

Good because it cut through national, stylistic, generational, and mainstream boundaries in a way which, to a visitor from New York (where no major museum has dared or deigned a survey of contemporary painting in years), was audacious and provocative. The show attempted a new way of looking at painting; even when it succumbed to its own biases, it was at least highly informative.

Rotten because it was hastily put together and insufficiently researched; because it seemed to have a hidden agenda showcasing the new German figurative Expressionism at the expense of both American and Italian painters, in particular; and because it omitted a number of excellent, mostly American painters who happen to be women. Which is to say: there were no women among the show's thirty-eight participants.

Indifferent because many of the artists selected were simply indifferent artists; because others were poorly represented; because the exhibition didn't live up to the organizers' claims for a special, carefully selected point of view, and because it also didn't live up to its presumptuous title.

There was not much painting that seemed particularly new in this exhibition, although there was a lot of spirit. In fact some of these painters seemed to feel that paintings are made on nothing but spirit, with little attention to ideas about structuring the surface and reinventing the painting object, or to personal touch, that great, innate non-idea. The bevy of issues raised about painting often quite inadvertently ranged from encouraging to damning. The show established beyond all doubt that painting is still not dead, but at certain points in the Royal Academy's galleries, I almost wished it were.

This noisy argumentative exhibition was a unique coming together—a clash at times—of a truly diverse array of headstrong talents. Organized in less than a year by three European curators when a slot in the Royal Academy's schedule suddenly opened up, the show had a thrown-together look that was often refreshing for such a major exhibition, but which also gave it a haphazard air that struck one as quintessentially British. Two of the organizers are English—Norman Rosenthal, R.A. Exhibitions Secretary, and Nicholas Serota, Director of London's Whitechapel Art Gallery; the third, Christos Joachimides, is a Greek-born critic who has lived in Berlin since 1957.

The exhibition's main goal seemed to have been to increase the visibility and appreciation of the northern Expressionist tradition in current painting, and to unseat American painting's hegemony. The emphasis was on work that could be read as Expressionist or figurative or preferably as both. The show's biggest and best lessons were in its discrepancies, in the variety of lives spent painting that it focused on.

Installation-wise, these differences were played to the style-crunching hilt.

The sense of competing egos and ambitions was palpable, frequently oppressive, sometimes even laughable. The show's location in the time-honored, time-worn Royal Academy was in many ways a huge plus—physically and emotionally—and an instant attention-getter too. The R.A.'s grand, high-ceilinged scale and genteel shabbiness added to both the drama of "A New Spirit" and to its casual look. Just to see so much contemporary painting in so much natural light was worth the price of admission, at least to an American.

There's no space in New York quite like the Royal Academy. Think of a structure along the lines of the Met crossed with P.S. 1 and you've got the tone of the Academy with this exhibition on its walls. Far from pristine, its galleries have yellowed linen wall-covering, scuffed-up white moldings, and heavy dadoes. The art was emphatically uncoddled, not protected by the customary hygienic white walls. Architecture and painting were pitted against each other; the grand indifference of the former versus the bustling energy of much (but not all) of the latter combined to turn the Academy, briefly, into some kind of dowager alternative space. [...]

14

EXHIBITION

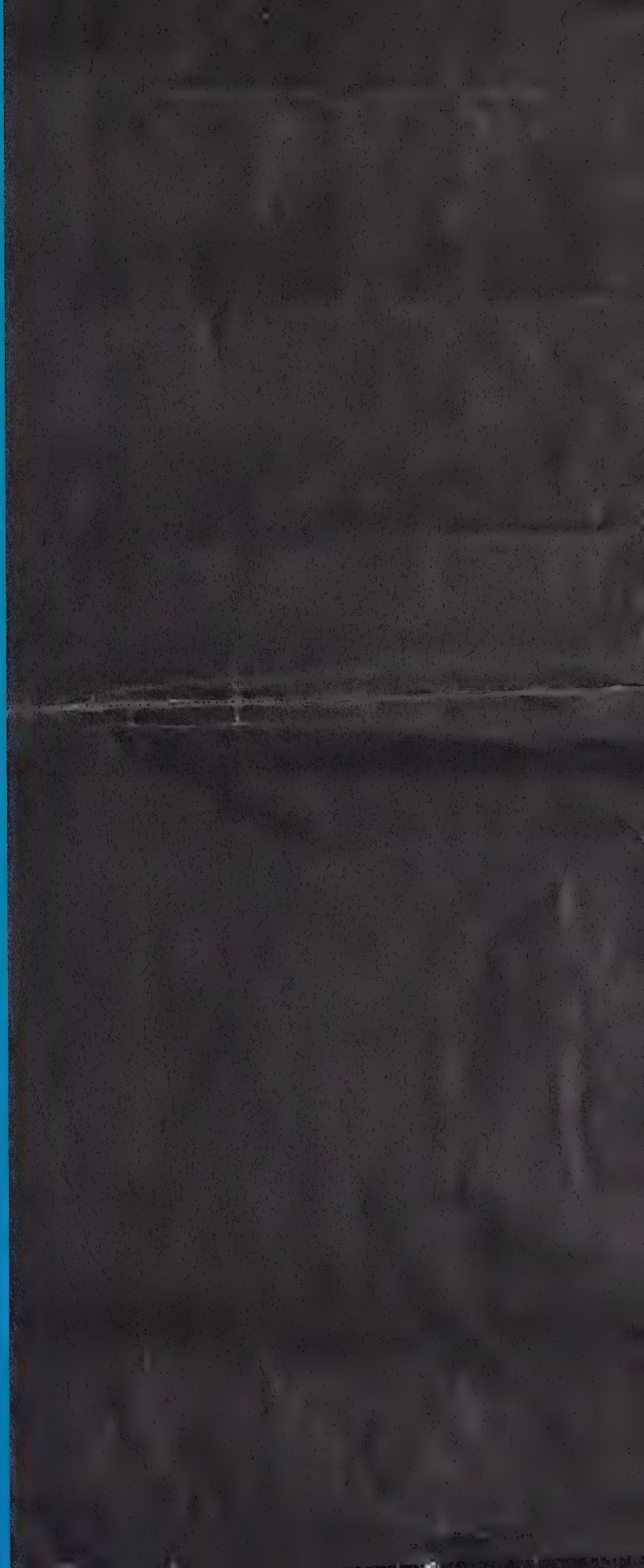
Les Immatériaux

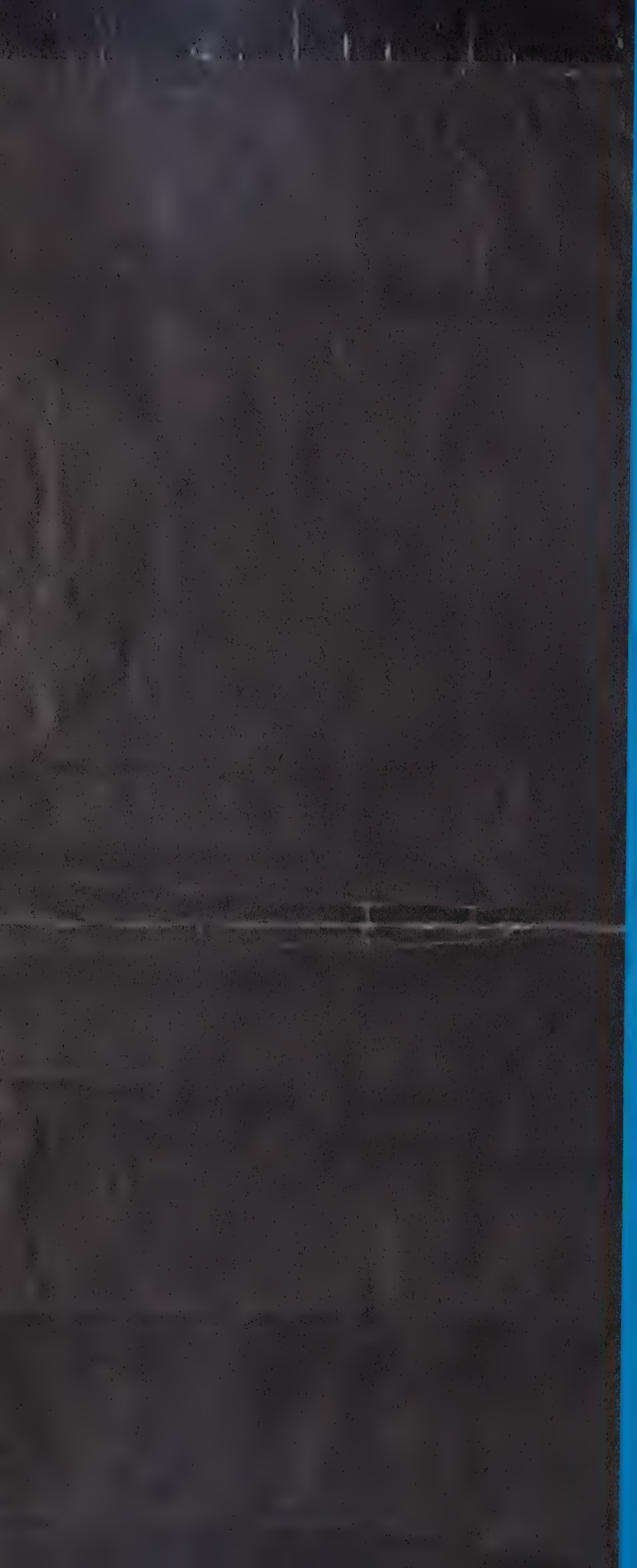
LOCATION

Centre de Création Industrielle Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

DATE

28 March–
15 July 1985





CURATOR
Jean François Lyotard and Thierry Chaput with exhibition design by Philippe Délis

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Exhibition primarily of material's rather than art works. Artists include: Giovanni Anselmo, Giacomo Balla, Robert Barry, Larry Bell, Daniel Buren, Jean-Simeon Chardin, César Domela, Peter Eisenman, Dan Graham, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay, Marcel Duchamp, Dan Flavin, Lucio Fontana, Nathalia Goetcharova, Zaha Hadid, Raoul Hausmann, Yves Klein, Mario Klonaris, Ben Koolhaas, Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis, Thierry Kuntzel, Michel Larionov, Kasimir Malevich, Piero Manzoni, Simone Martini, Quentin Metsys, Laszlo Maholy-Nagy, Jacques Monory, Sam Moree, François Morellet, Eadweard Muybridge, Irving Penn, Robert Ryman, Georges Saurat, Annegret Soltau, Takis, Katerina Thomadaki, Phillipe Thomas, Simon Vouet, Andy Warhol, Ian Wilson

EXHIBITION CATALOGS
Les Immatériaux: Épreuves d'écriture. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985. Album et inventaire. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS
'1984' et les présents de l'univers informationnel. Paris: 1985. Modernes, Et Après? 'Les Immatériaux'. Elie Theofilakis (ed.). Paris: 1985. Traverses, no.35, September 1985.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: ca.43
Number of works: unkown
Total attendance: unknown

Identified with the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, "Les Immatériaux" was an experiment in staging a complex conceptual investigation as an exhibition. Its subject was the way in which new materials and technologies have altered our notions of objecthood and the self; its intellectual context was postmodernism; and its structure was generated by communication theory. An immersive experience in which visitors chose their own paths, and presenting philosophical and literary commentary on technological and cultural artifacts, it anticipated the participatory and discursive aspects of many future exhibitions.

"Les Immatériaux" culminated the interdisciplinary exhibition program of the Centre Georges Pompidou. Consisting of four departments—the French national museum of modern art, a center for design and architecture, an institute for music and acoustic research, and a library—the Pompidou opened in 1977 with "Paris-New York," the first of director Pontus Hulten's series of four exhibitions organized around world capitals. Hulten's shows employed the resources of all departments to present narratives drawing from many fields, and they established the model followed by "Les Immatériaux." The show originated as an exhibition of new materials organized by the design and architecture department, the Center for Industrial Creation. Design historian Thierry Chaput had selected many of the objects by the time that Lyotard was asked to join him as co-curator. Focusing on materials to frame an analysis of the dissolution of the Enlightenment worldview, Lyotard formulated five themes that named the principal paths through the exhibition. But these lines connected to create an intersecting structure of more than sixty sites that filled the Pompidou's fifth floor. These areas were lit theatrically and divided by hanging sheets of gray wire mesh, the whole forming a labyrinth of many possible routes.

Most artworks were chosen by art curator Bernard Blistène, largely conceptual pieces with none of the Neo-Expressionist painting so popular internationally. Lyotard chose the opening object, an Egyptian relief of a goddess presenting the sign of life to the pharaoh Nectanebo II, and the show ended with a projection of the same relief, electronically dematerialized. Between were a vast range of things assembled by teams from across the institution, from paintings and photographs to artificial skin, holograms, rock videos, and interactive computer terminals. Visitors were required to rent headphones on which literary and philosophical readings were interspersed with music and sound effects, the segments beginning automatically on entering each area. With an audioguide lacking readily understandable interpretations, exhibits positioned within an obscure conceptual narrative, and a physical arrangement with no predetermined path, "Les Immatériaux" mystified the public. But the show also provided an evocative, if dislocating, experience, and included many entertaining elements.

There were two publications. One contained an account of the exhibition's creation and cards for the sites that could be arranged in any order. The second printed the discussion among twenty-six intellectuals reflecting on fifty words proposed by Lyotard and Chaput, something like a threaded e-mail conversation that had been displayed on computers in the show's last site. The exhibition also offered film and music programs, including a Stockhausen premier, and a three-day conference.

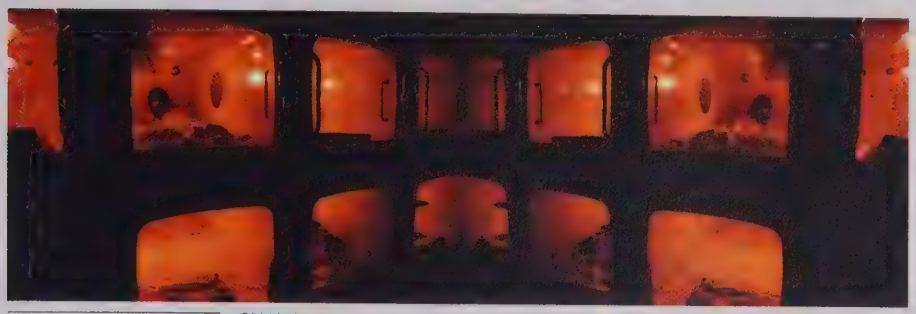
Lyotard considered "Les Immatériaux" to be an artwork in its own right, and it would inspire the artist Philippe Parreno and others, who in the next decade embraced the exhibition as the form of their work. But it was also a piece of philosophical exposition, and as such it raises the question of how effectively an exhibition can present deep analysis and difficult argumentation. While few shows have tried to present ideas as complex as those of "Les Immatériaux," this issue has become increasingly important as exhibitions more and more are viewed as discursive forms of research and inquiry as well as being sites of display.

← Poster for "Les Immatériaux," with logo in the form of a fingerprint.

↓ Cover of the publication *Modernes et après: Les Immatériaux*, edited by Elie Théofilakis. The exhibition incorporated projects initiated and organized by the Bpi (Bibliothèque publique d'information), also located in the Centre Pompidou building, including three publications: *"1984" et les présents de l'univers informationnel* (Paris, 1985); *Modernes et après: Les Immatériaux* (Paris 1985); and a special issue of *Traverses*, no. 35, September 1985.)

habitacle

Déclin de l'habitat comme lieu d'identification et de jouissance, apparition d'environnements calculés sur les fonctions organiques pertinentes ? Un habitat prothèse d'un corps privé de toute autre dimension que fonctionnelle ?



matériau deuxième peau
matrice toutes les peaux
matériel habitacle
matière
matrimité vite-habillé

«Cellule à dormir» japonaise

Unité de « cellule à dormir » japonaise avec radio télévision, téléphone, climatseur. Le sommeil reparateur comme seul enjeu pris en considération

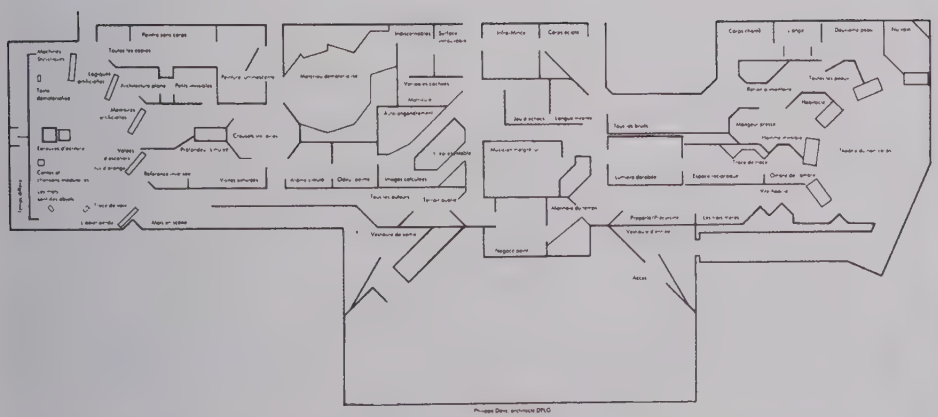
deuxième peau

La peau naturelle considérée comme premier vêtement. Enveloppe protégeant le corps de l'extérieur, elle instaure l'opposition dedans/dehors. Les prothèses de peau déplacent la limite. Où commence le dehors ?

Derme equivalent

matériau deuxième peau

plan de l'exposition



↑↑ Loose page from the publication *Album et inventaire*, one of the two catalogs for "Les Immatériaux," showing an array of Japanese sleeping chambers, a unit of which was included in the exhibition.

↑ A page showing the production of a "second skin" in a petri dish. Each page in the *Album* references one of the sites in the exhibition.

← A loose page containing a map of the exhibition.

↑ The scenography for the exhibition was designed by Philippe Délis.

← In the "All the Authors" site were computers that could engage the visitor in "false dialogue." Computers were also present in the "Writing Tests" site, which allowed visitors access to a number of dialogues between thirty writers and thinkers, including Daniel Buren, Jacques Derrida, and Bruno Latour, on topics such as "Artificial," "Code," and "Nature." These conversations were conducted via networked computers using France's Minitel system, a precursor to the Internet.

← A scene in the "All the Authors" site, showing Nam June Paik's *TV Buddha*.

↓ A visitor listening to the recorded mix of avant-garde poetry and prose. The headsets were a prototype being tested by the electronic company Philips, and were prone to break down.

↑ Scene in the "Materiel" (Material–Hardware) zone, showing the Japanese sleeping chamber.

→ Installation view showing visitors wearing Philips headsets.

↑ Showing "The Indiscernables" site, which featured three mannequins dressed as a policeman, a surgeon, and a cook, suspended from wires and set against mirrored backdrops.

← A visitor trying on a "simulated" dress using the "magic mirror."

↑ In the "Materiel" (Material–Hardware) zone, showing a maquette of a polystyrene Citroën car created by automatic manufacture processes.

→ Installation view of polystyrene heads and projected image.

LES IMMATÉRIAUX

Jean-François Lyotard
Art and Text, April 1985

PRESENTATION

In the tradition of modernity, the relationship between human beings and materials is fixed by the Cartesian program of mastering and possessing nature. A free will imposes its own aims on given elements by diverting them from their natural course. These aims are determined by means of the language that enables the will to articulate what is possible (a project) and to impose it on what is real (matter).

The ambition of the exhibition entitled "Les Immatériaux" is to make the visitor realize how far this relationship is altered by the existence of "new materials." New materials, in a wide meaning of the term, are not merely materials that are new. They question the idea of Man as a being who works, who plans and who remembers: the idea of an author.

The aim of the exhibition is to bring this interrogation into the limelight and intensify it. The selection of the illustrations will not be made according to technological criteria (nor even anthropological ones tin terms of their social effects, their psychic effects, etc.), but rather according to the manner in which they may set off and dramatize these questions. The term "immaterial," which in its contradiction denotes a material that is not matter for a project, is proposed to convey this uncertainty.

THE INTENTION

The conception of the exhibition will be philosophical. We will first of all ask questions, and incite others to ask questions, not only about what the material is, but also about what is associated with it: material versus spiritual, material versus personnel (in the administration, the army), hardware versus software (in a computer), matter versus form (in the analysis of a manufacturing object, a natural object or a work of art), matter versus mind (in philosophy and theology), matter versus energy (in classic physics), matter versus state (in modern physics), matrix versus product (in anatomy, printing, minting and casting); the problem of reproduction and, in art, of multiples) mother versus child, mother versus father, etc. [...]

THE CONTEXT

The exhibition attempts to characterize an aspect of our contemporary situation, associated with the new technological revolution. Whereas mechanical servants hitherto rendered services that were essentially "physical," automatons generated by computer science and electronics can now carry out our mental operations. Various activities of the mind have consequently been mastered. Thus the new technology pursues and perhaps accomplishes the modern project of becoming master and possessor, but in so doing it forces this project to reflect on itself; it disturbs and destabilizes it. It shows that the mind of man is also part of the "matter" it intends to master; and that, when suitably processed, matter can be organized in machines that in comparison may have the edge over mind. The relationship between mind and matter is no longer one between an intelligent subject with a free will of his own and an inert object. They are now cousins in the family of "immaterials."

Yet technology is not the cause of the decline of the modern figure: rather, it is one of its signs. Our grief is another of its symptoms. At the end of the eighteenth century, Europe and the United States in the name of the free and virtuous enlightened mind, claimed to spread light, law, and wealth over the human world. After two centuries of massacres and civil, international, world wars, we are now beginning to go into mourning because of this arrogance. In its scenography at least, "Les Immatériaux" should distantly echo this sense of wise melancholy.

The "target" of this exhibition is a precise one: to arouse the visitor's reflection and his anxiety about the postmodern condition. [...]

The eye will be deprived of the exclusive privilege it enjoys in the modern gallery. Neither will there be a clearly signposted itinerary, giving the uneasy reflection that the exhibition hopes to provoke. Indeed, it is not a question of presenting an exhibition (*exposition*), but rather an "overexposition," in the sense employed by Virilio when he speaks of an "overexposed city." And neither is it a question of arranging the objects shown according to "subject matter" or discipline, as though the delimitations from which these resulted were still intact today.

THE HYPOTHESIS

The local is in the Centre Georges Pompidou, at the heart of modern old Paris: the Great Gallery on the fifth floor (the highest). A rectangular space of 3,000 square meters [32,300 square feet], with two foyers (mezzanine on the fourth floor, the entrance level.) Level floor, outer walls of plate glass, cables and ducts visible in the ceiling, permanent foyer entrance and exit lights. In short, relatively few constraints except for lighting.

On this level there will be twenty to thirty radio transmitters, each one covering a carefully limited zone. Each transmitter will broadcast a soundtrack relating to one of the "mat" questions examined above (cf. "Conception," "The Principle.") The visitors are provided with headphones. The oral messages they receive are not necessarily instructions, but also poems, prose, questions, exclamations, quotations, explanations, musical messages, too. Arts of time, the most immaterial.

In each zone sites are assembled. They are taken from diverse domains (foodstuffs, painting, astrophysics, industry, etc.) but grouped together according to the common question that they illustrate. For example, maternity: who is the composer of a piece of electronic music? Who is the mother of a child born of an ovum impregnated in vitro, implanted in a "surrogate mother," and later adopted? What is the source of light in an abstract painting? The sites may either compare two moments in the same discipline, or confront two different disciplines.

Between the zones are "desert," neutralized regions. The visitor, passing from one zone to another, becomes an investigator; he is accosted by the voices and the music, as well as by the sites he sees. His own individual itinerary might be recorded on a magnetic memory card, and given him in the form of a printout when he leaves.

ENTRÉE EN MATIÈRE

Thierry Chaput
Les Immatériaux,
Album et inventaire (exh. cat.), 1985

Hung with difficult grays, lit by improbable lights, floating unpredictable ideas, at this hour, on this day of this year, suspended, ordered with rigor and without a system, "the immaterials" expose themselves between seeing, sensing, and hearing.

The unavoidable technoscience is present, without holding center stage. Expurgated of its bewitching content, of its magic, one senses it behind the scenes.

The ground is clear and free; movables and immovables are caught in mid-air, weightless.

As though through squinting eyes, the images constructed sign by sign, written, expunge the parasitic, the trivial, to let only the pertinent minimal subsist.

The sound opens up another space and another reflexive path, which are thus filled with texts and music.

The polysemy of images, of scenes, and the accompanying polyphony form a collage from which arises a new and singular other meaning.

A presentation of high compactness, a concentration of matter for thought, the sites follow one another and punctuate a polymorphous unfolding.

The light, revealing a rare earth, unknown site, or precious pigment—it depends—brings to the fore a hidden meaning.

From here, looking over there and testing the relation to the next body of knowledge, depending on the distance and the obstacles.

Listening, here, to the blood flowing through the veins—Doppler—and learning from this music. Observing, elsewhere, in the faraway distance, in the cosmos, the trace of the very first history, of matter before precipitation.

When the true becomes uncertain, when existence loses its Manichaeism and is but a state of density of a probable presence, then the "grasping" becomes blurred.

Liberated from the hegemony of understanding (vain vanity?), "the immaterials" then call upon a secret sensibility.

IMMATÉRIAUX

Jean Maheu, President of the Centre Georges Pompidou
Les Immatériaux,
Album et inventaire (Exh. Cat.), 1985

Under this title and its multiple undertones, the Centre de Création Industrielle at the Centre Georges Pompidou proposes a different exhibition from those the public are accustomed to seeing in the Main Gallery on the fifth floor. It is different in form and intentions. It is an essay, indeed, in the literary sense of the word—an attempt, without the pretence of authority, to innovate in the well-established realm of exhibition making. And to do so in a twofold way.

In terms of content, "Les Immatériaux" aims to involve the Centre Georges Pompidou more thoroughly in the radical questioning of mankind and its environment, with which the evolution of the technosciences and the lifestyles they induce are confronting us at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Admittedly, as a cultural institution, the Centre's natural calling is the selective display and structured analysis of the products of artistic creation by means of retrospective, monographic, or historic exhibitions, and this is what it applies itself to doing. It is, furthermore, its duty to present and contribute to examining more closely, in an intelligible form but without demagogical concessions, the current issues of creation, the evolution of the relationships between cultures, the new context in which humanity finds itself struggling today. In this regard, any serious cultural reflection needs to take into account not only the economic and monetary but also the intellectual and ethical crisis that is our lot. This is the perspective adopted by "Les Immatériaux." Its ambition is indeed to make manifest—visually and audibly—the opposition between the project of modernity (of emancipation and of progress), which is unwinding, and the investigations of emerging postmodernity. "Les Immatériaux" sees itself as a "dramaturgy of the nascent era, of change."

It also aims to make us aware of the fact that research and development in the technosciences and the arts lead to a situation in which matter, material and reality can no longer be grasped immediately and "a veil of numbers tends to come between reality and the mind."

These intentions suppose a new exhibition concept, a new organization of the relationship between the visitors and what is proposed to them, or even a questioning of the traditional exhibition as a medium. Similarly, the differences that characterize "Les Immatériaux" become apparent in its presentation: no more picture rails, but suspended frames varying from transparency to opacity thanks to the combination of materials and light; no longer a unique and chronological path through the exhibition, but a plurality of journeys across specific "sites." This shift also concerns the tools of knowledge and insight accompanying the exhibition: the traditional catalog is substituted with various products testifying to a different approach ("Inventory," identifying the "sites"; "Album," retracing the curators' work itinerary; "Writing Tests," making public the results of a collective, interactive and distance writing experiment).

Such an undertaking could not have seen the light of day without patient mediation and rigorous work. It is the merit and originality of the team in charge of this manifestation to have taken up this challenge, of making philosophy—Jean-François Lyotard—and the cultural profession—Thierry Chaput and his collaborators—work together in such a way that the idea would be implemented even in the slightest detail of the displays and that the various cultural, technical, and budgetary constraints bearing on any such staging remained subordinate to the concept at stake while questioning it. This conjunction should become a milestone.

It has also provided the Centre Georges Pompidou's and its reputation for interdisciplinarity with a new and vigorous opportunity to express itself by connecting "Les Immatériaux" with the Bibliothèque Publique d'Information, the Musée National d'Art Moderne, and the IRCAM. [...]

CANDIDE AT "LES IMMATÉRIAUX"

D Schneidermann
Le Monde, 2 April 1985

Bingo! If the exhibition "Les Immatériaux," at Beaubourg, aims to undermine visitors' convictions, to impregnate them with the notion of relativity in all things, to blur in them the boundaries between the certain and the improbable, it has succeeded beyond its expectations. Look at them as they step out, these Sunday afternoon visitors, with the rolling gait of those who have navigated by sight from the unfindable to the indiscernible, from the dematerialized to the unrepresentable, ears still brimming with texts by Bachelard, Proust or Henri Michaux, pouring forth from the headphones distributed at the entrance, eyes reeling from having to search for subtitles.

All are equal before the unfathomable. Whether, by coming here, they have responded to the desire to shine at mundane dinners, their own naive curiosity, or the incontrovertible injunctions of a partner suddenly lusting for culture, all of them have had to—shortly after the entrance and the Egyptian bas-relief showing a goddess offering the breath of life to King Nectanebo II—give up on understanding. The booklet available at the entrance had warned them: "When the true becomes uncertain, when existence loses its Manichaeism and is but a state of density of a probable presence, then the 'grasping' becomes blurred. Liberated from the hegemony of understanding (vain vanity?), 'Les Immatériaux' then call upon a secret sensibility."

France is thus cut in two. There are those whose "secret sensibility" has answered the roll call. And the others, shipwrecked, bogged down in the "hegemony of understanding," with no other option than to cling to the life belt of their Cartesianism, looking desperately from one room to the next for a common thread. "I didn't understand anything," admits Paul, an accountant in the Paris region, "but you have to see it, this is what's being done these days, you have to go along." Although "very much attracted by philosophy and all its [sic] things," Michèle, who accompanies him, admits to being "very perplexed" here. However, she has at least understood that "there is nothing to be understood. If they'd wanted to explain it to us, they'd have put some labels, captions, or anything really." [...]

A NAIVE AND MACABRE "CURIOSITY SHOP"

Michel Cournot
Le Monde, 12 April 1985

You are walking into an almost totally black tube. Facing you, in an oblique mirror, is a twisted, blood-red scarecrow. Your headphones are transmitting screams, collapses, crashes—sounds of an unspecified bombing.

Further on, in a black box, a gray coat lying on a gray chair in the middle of an empty, gray room. No lighting. It doesn't feel like night time, because the night has different shades, reliefs, and stains. No, it's like a void, a gray of emptiness.

Another box: On a black floor, three pairs of empty, used, and muddy clogs are moving forward every now and then, as though donned by invisible beings. Here, too, everything is gray and obscure.

The last display case/cubicle of this series entitled "Theater of the Non-Body": three ashtrays on stands aligned in the center of an empty room whose bay window, at the opposite end, opens onto a building—a housing project—whose windows are lit. Ashes and stubs are spilling out of the full ashtrays, forming mounds on the floor.

The headphones speak to the ear: "I didn't see the light," "I didn't have a life," "he'll do himself to death because of me," "perhaps they will bury him, if they find him," "I'll be inside."

HANGINGS AND SCARS

Then comes a succession of small, dark cells decked in wire mesh.

First cage, entitled "Vain Nude." A film projected onto the mesh, at the far end, shows a standing woman, without any clothes, rather old, being examined by a man in a white blouse: he inspects her gums and the interior of her nostrils, like a horse dealer examining livestock. The woman looks frightened. Hanging in the foreground of the cage are seven naked, gray rubber-skin mannequins.

Next cage, called "Second Skin." It holds bits of human skin on loan from the Severe Burns Unit of the Percy Hospital. There is also an almost similar piece of freeze-dried pig's skin.

Next cage, called "The Angel." A frontal photograph of a naked seated woman; she is covered in long scars; the scars have been stitched up with black things resembling thorns. The woman grimaces in pain.

Next cage, called "All the Skins." These are simply, in the meshing of a triangle, twelve hanged men, without heads (they are hanging by the severed neck). These hanged men are each wearing a recognizable attire: fencer, riot policeman, deep-sea diver, fireman etc.

In the cage of these hanged men, a partly "mundane," partly "snob" voice in the headphones reads out a fashion review, while in the previous cages it was a slow succession of fragments such as: "My body is not my body," "It has chosen the wrong gender," "Your body was already a prosthesis to the impossible prostitute," "I farted from folly and from excess ..."

Next wire-mesh cell, called "Cockpit." This is a Japanese "sleeping chamber". A place to lie down flat, with measuring devices and screens. It is tiny and resembles a padded isolation cell. In the earphones: "I would call the earth nothingness ... there is no other possible world for me ... A bed on which being born and dying would turn out to be forbidden ..."

Next cage, "Fragmented body." These are life-size images of "skinned men," these representations of muscles and organs for medical use. The headphones are broadcasting sequences of hooting, very close to the "foghorns" at the entrance of the access channel to a port when the weather is bad.

Next cage, "Indiscernibles." Again hanged men: there are three of them, with heads but without shoes. A police agent, a surgeon, a cook.

As I was passing through the "Registration Number" cage, in which is exhibited an enlarged fragment of a fingerprint that serves as the exhibition's emblem, the receiver headphones fell silent. A female attendant passed through the wire-mesh cells yelling: "It's a breakdown, be patient, it's another breakdown, wait ..." I waited, and as the sirens and sentences failed to return, I hurried through the "Painting without body" cage, four states of a painting representing an exploding aerplane, and the "Forgotten *terroir*" cage, where under a glass case lies a brick ... I also noticed white screens, computer keyboards.

A FESTIVAL OF THE DÉJÀ-VU

An individual who has come to Paris from the provinces or from abroad because it is springtime, who goes to the Centre Pompidou because it rains and because it is a museum, and who chooses to see this exhibition because the museum's posters encourage him to do so, will come out of it with the impression of having seen something rather short, rather empty, rather dark, and rather macabre, or even funereal. He will be under the impression of not having seen anything new, because wax museums, horror cabinets in traveling fairs, medical books, and scientific or medical films screened in science palaces or broadcast on TV exist in every country. [...]

A REFLECTION ON POSTMODERNISM

Kate Linker

Artforum, September 1985

[...] "Les Immatériaux" is part of an ongoing polemical reflection on postmodernism by its organizer, Jean-François Lyotard. For Lyotard, as for certain other theorists, postmodernism is not a style succeeding the dissolution of modernism, but rather a cultural condition resulting from the erosion of modern period ideals; it marks a historical moment, one of fairly slow germination, characterized by a shift in assumptions inherited from the Enlightenment. At the core of these assumptions is the humanist code as it converges on the "masterly" figure of man; inasmuch as postmodernism emphasizes the regulating power of social forces, it can be said to describe the decentering of the self. For Lyotard, one of the crucial factors in this process has been the postwar development of technoscientific culture. The result is an exhibition that fetishized technology, using myriad display vitrines, computer consoles, and scientific products. It was a wax museum, computer center and curiosity shop rolled into one. However, the implications of its perspective are rich in speculation.

The specific aim of "Les Immatériaux" was to examine the way in which the new "immaterial" materials associated with the technological revolution have altered man's identity as maker; the exhibition comprised an inquiry into the changes effected by the demise of creation defined as material production. Since the implications of "creation" are both theological and juridical, the end of the concept of masterable reality has broad repercussions. Some sixty-nine sites, developed with the aid of a group of researchers, were dispersed through the gallery so as to provoke questions in science, literature, art, and daily life—to define postmodernism, in other words, within the complex of a moment in culture. The spectator moved among different "zones" equipped with headphones that transmitted a series of texts and musical arrangements. The sites were disposed along five interlocking routes with carefully chosen themes. Beginning from the Sanskrit root "ma" (to make by hand, to measure, to build) and using certain terms of linguistic "pragmatics," Lyotard conceived these paths so as to inquire into the origin (*maternité*), medium (*materiau*), equipment (*materiel*), subject matter (*matière*), and code (*matrice*) of contemporary reality. What emerged, then, was both a physical manifestation and a conceptual interrogation of the displacements of postindustrial society. [...]

"Les Immatériaux," however, may be an exhibition that looks better on paper and reads better in its accompanying literature than it did in its physical form. It raises the question of whether profound shifts of a philosophical nature can be represented through objects—whether the immaterial can be, as it were, materialized. For despite the privilege it granted to technology, "Les Immatériaux" was rich with suggestive speculation concerning the assault being made on the Western program of mastery. Above all, the show was an attack on the philosophy of being, grounded in experience, that Benjamin said atrophied with the entry of the machine. And it contained an important directive to historicize, not ontologize or perpetuate, objectification, abandoning it with other Enlightenment baggage. The multivolume publication that accompanied "Les Immatériaux" prompts inquiry into the changes wrought by the decline of the direct or transitive function of the author—to say nothing of the shifts thereby effected in claims to authority, to legitimacy and control. Such ideas resist trivializing illustration through computerized bric-a-brac. But, similarly, the idea of the installation transcends its realization, for, in a move that has bearing on esthetics, Lyotard suggests that the mastery Western culture accords the eye may be diminishing with the postmodernist valorization of time. In an installation whose many sites were designed to resemble constellations, the geometry of domination transmitted through Renaissance perspective no longer informed the disposition of space. Space did not radiate from and return to the spectator who progressed through it, but was dispersed in zones, the diffusion of whose boundaries was extended by sound. Through this unstable configuration, which imposed no fixed itinerary, Lyotard would remind us that the gallery, in contrast, is a modern institution, obeying a linear teleology: "Gallery: an establishment of culture, that is to say of acquisition and assimilation of heterogeneous data, within the unity of an experience which constitutes a subject."

15

EXHIBITION

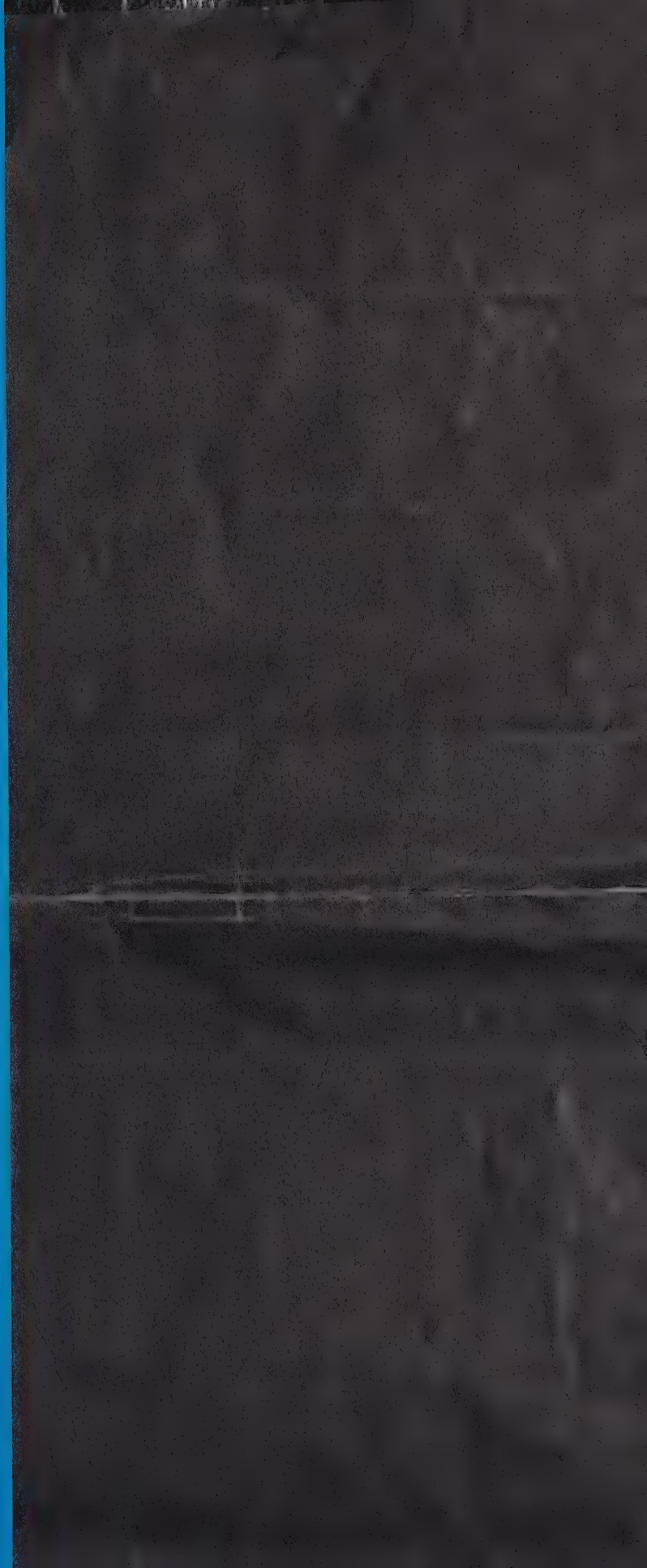
Chambres d'Amis

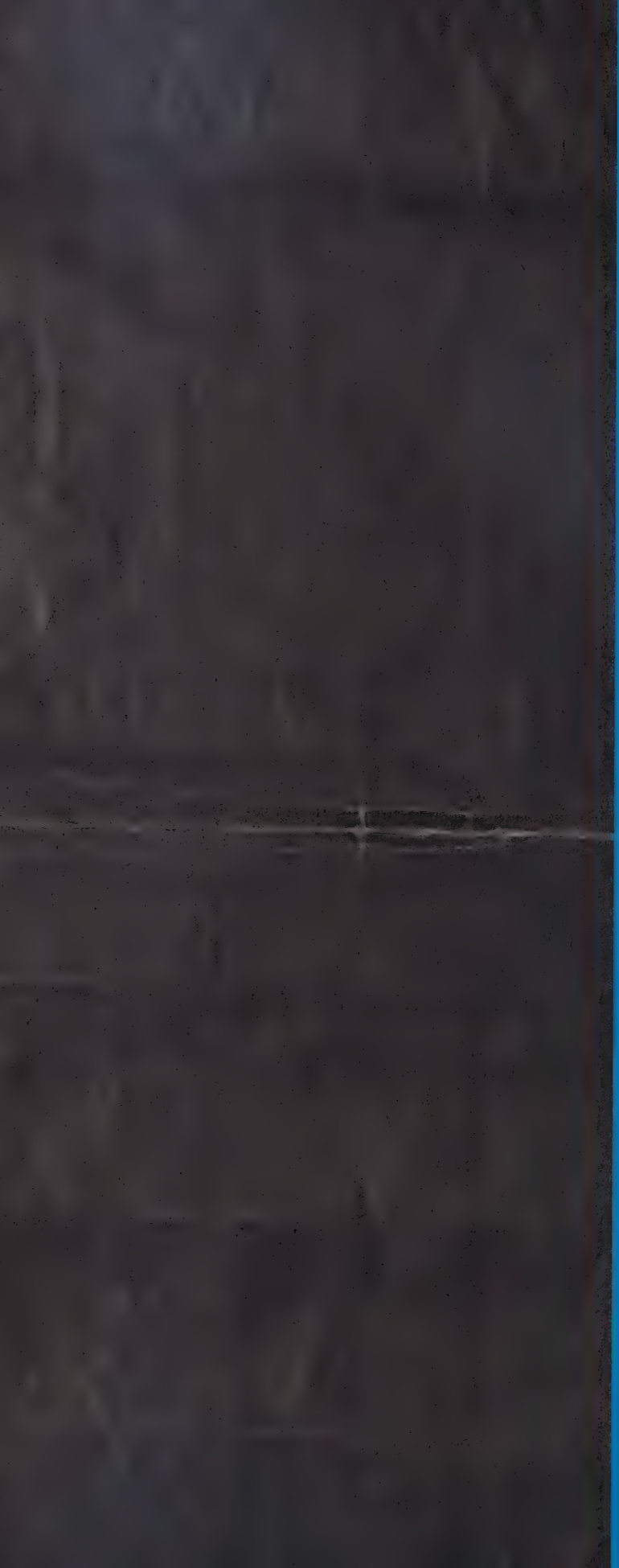
LOCATION

Private homes
in Ghent

DATE

21 June–
21 September
1986





CURATOR
Jan Hoet

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Carla Accardi, Christian Boltanski, Raf Boeckx, Daniël Buren, Michaël Buthe, Jacques Charlier, Nicola de Maria, Luciano Fabro, Günther Förg, Jef Geys, Dan Graham, Milan Grygar, François Hers, Kazuo Katase, Nnek Kemps, Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis, Bertrand Lavier, Sol LeWitt, Danny Matthys, Gerhard Merz, Mario Merz, Marisa Merz, Helmut Middendorf, Juan Muñoz, Hidetoshi Nagasawa, Bruce Nauman, Maria Nordman, Oswald Oberhuber, Hauke Pollanca, Panamarenko, Giulio Paolini, Raydan Rabinowitch, Norbert Radermacher, Roger Raveel, Wolfgang Rebbie, Claude Rutault, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Remo Salvadori, Rob Scholte, Ettore Spalletti, Paul Thek, Ninfa Tirroni, Charles Vandenhove, Philip van Isacker, Jan Vercruysse, Jean-Luc Vilmouth, Martin Walde, Lawrence Weiner, Robin Winters, Gilberto Zorio

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Chambres d'Amis. Ghent: Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, 1986. With texts by Jan Hoet, Louis Vandersanden, Lieven T'Hooft, Robert Hoozee, Frank Deckwitz, Geert Bekaert, and Yukio Mishima.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 51
Number of works: ca.58
Total attendance: ca.60.000

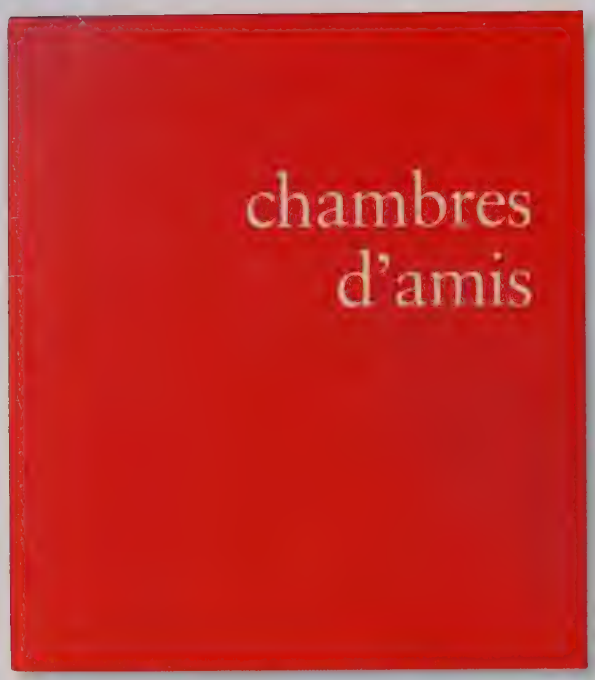
By inviting fifty-one Belgian and international artists to create works in private homes in Ghent, Jan Hoet sought to achieve one of the goals of much advanced art since the late 1950s, the uniting of art and life. "Chambres d'Amis" did this quietly, without the outlandishness of Fluxus nor the assertive presence of public sculpture. Or, rather, the works themselves were situated quietly within domestic and familial settings. For the exhibition was mounted amidst a summer's promotional activity around contemporary art, coinciding internationally with the 1986 Venice Biennale and locally with Ghent's ambitious "Initiative '86."

Jan Hoet was Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent, at the time a small institution located within the larger Museum of Fine Arts. His museum was thus unable to physically accommodate a major exhibition. By dispersing "Chambres d'Amis" throughout the city in fifty-eight private residences, Hoet not only overcame this limitation but also was able to involve many members of the community. His call for individuals willing to have an artist make a work in their home, and to open their residences to the public for three months, surprisingly yielded twice the offers needed. And these offers came not only from the wealthy but from across the economic spectrum. One artist, Jef Geys, created works in the houses of six of Ghent's poorer families.

Once Hoet selected the artists and the homes were found, most artists visited the houses and discussed the project with the occupants. Some of them took a more formal approach, working from visual and spatial features of the house. But in other cases the work related closely to the residents or to the site, such as Joseph Kosuth's covering the walls of a psychiatrist's home with obscured Freudian texts, or Dan Graham's constructing an outdoor pavilion too small for grown-ups after noticing sounds from a nearby kindergarten.

Hoet positioned the exhibition as subversive, as opposing the elitism of the museum. By moving artworks into private homes and collaborating with ordinary people, he sought to escape what he took to be the stultifying institutional context of art. The experience of "Chambres d'Amis" certainly was different than that of a typical exhibition, with visitors given a map to follow and a bicycle to ride to the houses. And the exhibition was encountered in a different kind of viewing time, a more relaxed one of cycling around a town and devoting more attention to the artworks. This change in the temporality of art-viewing arguably was more radical than the move outside the museum, which Daniel Buren's project suggested was ineffective in breaking the hold of the institution. In a private home Buren decorated a couple's guestroom with his signature stripes. But he also placed inside the museum an exact replica of that room with his intervention, highlighting the institutional frame with which "Chambres d'Amis" surrounded all of the houses.

"Chambres d'Amis" was mounted in conjunction with "Initiative '86." A summer-long project of more than a dozen Ghent arts organizations, it centered on a show in Saint Peter's Abbey of contemporary Belgian art selected by international curators Kasper König, Jean-Hubert Martin, and Gosse Oosterhof. The opening events on 21 June were covered live on Belgian television in "The Longest Day," a program lasting more than six hours by Jef Cornelis, creator of numerous television programs on contemporary artists and exhibitions, including "Sonsbeek 71" and "Documenta 5." Using a helicopter, mobile film crews, and a television studio, Cornelis followed curators, critics, and artists interacting with one another and speaking about their work, the exhibitions, and the state of contemporary art. Documenting a fair amount of "Chambres d'Amis," "The Longest Day" joined Hoet's show as one of the most innovative cultural works of the time.

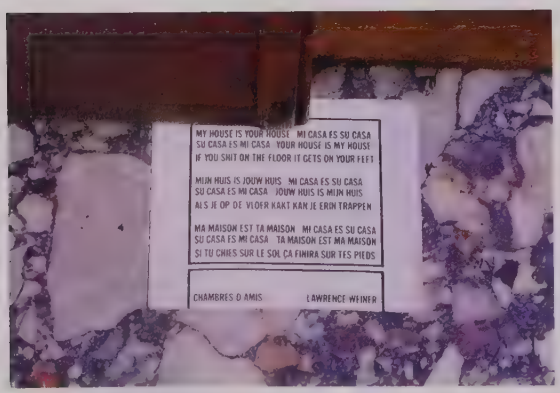


← Catalog cover for the exhibition "Chambres d'Amis," 1986.

↓ Joseph Kosuth's *Zero & Not*, an installation in the home of a psychatrist, using texts from Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. *Zero & Not* had been shown in New York at the Leo Castelli Gallery just before its presentation in Ghent.

↙ Wolfgang Robbe's postcard of Jan Hoet dressed as a museum guard, sitting in Robbe's installation. The postcard doubled the two rooms that he had at his disposal, as a critique of museum displays.

↙↙ Lawrence Weiner's *My House is Your House*, which the artist placed in each one of the participating homes in "Chambres d'Amis." The text piece reads, in three languages, "If you shit on the floor it gets on your feet."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SU CASA ES MI CASA YOUR HOUSE IS MY HOUSE
IF YOU SHIT ON THE FLOOR IT GETS ON YOUR FEET
MIJN HUIS IS JOUW HUIS MI CASA ES SU CASA
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CHAMBRES D'AMIS LAWRENCE WEINER

← Luciano Fabro's *C'est la Vie* (*That's Life*), which centered on the fact that a young child was living in the house at the time, although it also relates to the explosion of the nuclear reactor in Chernobyl two months before. Fabro patterned the shapes of the long white pieces of cloth, with which the child can play and that are laid around the house and out the windows, on the meandering lines drawn at the end of Volume VI of Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, to represent the arbitrariness and irrationality of human life.

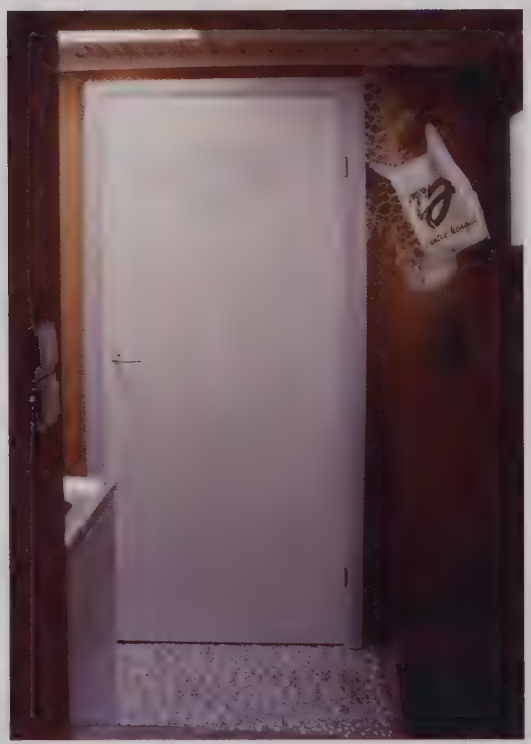
↓ Luciano Fabro's *C'est la Vie* (*That's Life*).

^ Bertrand Lavier's untitled installation, which fused pointilist painting motifs with home decor.

→ Dan Graham's *Children's Pavilion* was a small-scale pavilion designed for children, in which adults could not stand upright.

↓ Mario Merz's untitled installation of stone and glass tables, which weaved through the rooms of a house like a reptile. In Merz's work, tables often represent the social interaction of the local community.

↘ Paul Thek's *Visual Therapy—dedicated to Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen*, an installation devoted to an American cleric who publicly opposed nuclear proliferation and urged non-payment of taxes as a solution.



Jef Geys wrote the three key words of the French Revolution of 1789—"Egalité", "Fraternité", "Liberté"—in three languages on doors of six houses of less well-off people in Ghent. In the exhibition catalog, Jan Hoet noted that "these doors lead to nowhere, probably just like the ideals for which they stand."

↗→ Jef Geys' *Egalité, Fraternité, Liberté.*

CHAMBRES D'AMIS: A MUSEUM VENTURES OUT

Jan Hoet

Chambres d'Amis, 1986 (exh. cat.)

"Chambres d'Amis" [...] the fermentation of an idea, spontaneously born and grown, has developed into a complex adventure. Quite unexpectedly, the realization of that vision has affected Art in some of its fundamental aspects. The realization of the project has surpassed its initial intention to such an extent that it is as yet not possible to grasp all the implications of the event. "Chambres d'Amis" is an enriching adventure, but not only on the artistic level. An equally important and gratifying aspect of the initiative is the fact that it has managed to mobilize a large number of people for the same ideal.

A long time ago, the painting broke loose from its frame and the canvas was cut into bits. The sculpture is no longer at ease on its socle—if it still has one. The sculpture is often not even standing. It is hanging or lying, branching, sprawling in the room, sometimes crumbled to pieces and scattered over the floor. Art seems to be running wild, it has lost its regular place, its center. This phenomenon does not grieve the contemporary artist; on the contrary, it fills him with abundant force and vital stimuli. However, the same does not apply to most museums. The museums lag behind. They still think themselves capable of ensnaring art in their large, tight frames; and they run the risk of suffocating art as a result of their function, the preservation of works of art. This leads us to the malaise felt by a large part of the public when confronted with art. The fact that most of the public experiences contemporary art too often as hermetic, elitist, and extremely "difficult," is probably due to the deadly serious atmosphere and the aura of "important culture" that pervade most museums. Even the most playful work of art becomes weighty in a museum.

This situation has repeatedly been attacked, analyzed, and deplored, both by art critics and through works of art. The various artistic tendencies, manifestos, happenings, etc., of the last decades speak volumes. They all tried to break away from the museum's custody; all in their own way: some aggressively, others subtly. However, their specific strategies too often supported the museum's smart way of embedding all art.

Anyway, the museum has apparently been able to maintain its authority, perhaps partly thanks to its extended tolerance, its broad-minded vision, and flexibility in matters of contemporary art. Bearing in mind these reflections, the project "Chambres d'Amis" can only be called subversive. Its simplicity and naivety seem provocative: approximately fifty inhabitants of Ghent have put their homes, entirely or partly, at the disposal of the same number of artists. The artists' self-imposed risk is to transform these spaces—within the limits imposed by the owners or occupiers—into something that can be identified as "art."

Is this project perhaps another attempt to "integrate" art in everyday reality, in "real" life? If so, is it not surprising that this present call for integration is coming from the museum, an institution that rather seemed intent on resisting such integration, at least to a certain extent?

The idea of realizing a symbiosis between art and reality is certainly not unique to "Chambres d'Amis." The fact that this initiative is pulling down the museum walls for the course of one summer does not imply that the museum is going to walk the streets for the purpose of taking her rightful position in the heart of society. In order to break out of its isolation, the museum did not consider it advisable to exhibit its objects in sunny, elegantly laid-out parks or in strategically chosen squares in the center of town. That kind of exhibitionism is indeed the worst remedy for the museum's isolation. The museum would simply find itself again in another place, but fundamentally unchanged. Nothing would have affected the obviousness of its manipulating, embracing power, not one flaw would have dislocated the strength of its authority. Such a condescending contact with the "people" can in no way affect the museum's centralized control of the arts.

The Ghent Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst is not merely going to live it up this summer. "Chambres d'Amis" has no intention of organizing a non-committal tourist attraction, yet another summer "show"; its ideas of integration are infinitely more subtle and cautious. It does not shout the significance of contemporary art from the housetops. "Chambres d'Amis" is an example of mysterious, sensitive penetration. Art discreetly pervades regions where it has been excluded for a long time: houses, spaces inhabited by people!

Not only—as some skeptics might remark—in the homes of extremely rich art collectors or people in the design trade, nor in meeting rooms of so-called "progressive" associations, nor in empty studios of obscure artists, but in all sorts of homes, from very ordinary to stately ones, where everyday life and rituals are mostly (if it were not for "Chambres d'Amis"!) going on in the most evident, natural manner.

Such a situation is certainly an unprecedented challenge for the artist. His task is to transform everyday reality, its grayness and noisy obtrusiveness, which he—more than anybody else—experiences as suffocating, into a work of art. Baudelaire's statement, that the poet's task is to mold clay into gold, has become surprisingly concrete.

The artist is frequently interrupted during the creative process: life, which he usually evokes, transforms, or represents as an abstraction in the quiet loneliness of his studio, now actually keeps penetrating his works. Perhaps via the door of an adjacent room that will not shut, or an extremely devoted and considerate hostess, asking too often "whether he needs something." Or perhaps he does not like the color of the parquet, or an interested neighbor comes in to disturb him with questions about the deeper significance of his work. All these concrete situations, which would ordinarily disturb and irritate him, now unintentionally and accidentally infiltrate his artistic creation and determine the progressive development of his work of art. [...]

["Chambres d'Amis"] swarms out of the museum to all corners of town in order to reflect on its own problems. The museum's outing is far from a brash, forced attempt to

integrate art with reality, far from an invasion, far from a blind plunge into everyday life. On the contrary, "Chambres d'Amis" wants to start a cautious, lucid flirtation, to indulge for a while in an adventure, the consequences of which it cannot or will not foresee. It consciously wants to create a zone beyond itself, where it is no longer lord or master. It took care of the first contacts between artists and hosts, but it cannot possibly predict or control the further development of these contacts. [...]

ALBRECHT DÜRER WOULD HAVE COME TOO

Pierre Luigi Tazzi
Artforum, September 1986

The patron saint of Geel, where Jan Hoet, the director of Ghent's Museum von Hedendaagse Kunst, grew up, is Saint Dymphna, and, in the name of that mysterious protectress, this Belgian village preserves a medieval tradition that has passed unscathed through the Rennaisance and into the modem era: to honor Saint Dymphna, a family offers hospitality to a lunatic. With the waning of the Middle Ages, the idea of the Narrenschiff, the ship of fools, made its disturbing appearance, condemning the insane to a state of aterritoriality; during the centuries when what Edmund Husserl called "European Culture" established itself, they came to be interned in total institutions, asylums. But the village protected by Saint Dymphna has, over the centuries, maintained the ancient custom, sustaining an attitude based on conciliation with diversity rather than institutional stigmatization of it. And Hoet's latest project relates to the practice of Geel.

Intriguingly titled "Chambres d'Amis"—"guest rooms," or, literally, "friends' rooms"—the show places art in fifty-eight houses belonging to everyday townspeople, thereby carrying the work outside the separate universe, the total institution, of the museum, to bring it within the private zone of the private home, an asocial place insofar as it is removed from the public arena.

That the work of art has no place in the everyday life of the house is not true, yet the moment an artwork crosses the threshold of the private, it is transformed; either it becomes a constituent but inessential element of decor (meager or exquisite, but always decor), or it is characterized as a trophy, a symbolic capture of an equally symbolic sign, a fetishistic appropriation of bits (however chosen, still just bits), part of something larger and unattainable. Vis-à-vis collecting, we may recall the behaviorist scientist Ivan Pavlov's remark that the practice helps to replace the possession of a goal in life; or the common complaint, "I've seen them come, I've seen them go. Everybody left me; nobody paid me." Clearly, none of this is Hoet's concern. His project takes the existing exhibition structure off its hinges, goes beyond the limits of the frame and spills over, whole, into an interior. Art here no longer offers a mirror or a window, nor constitutes the privileged sign of a choice, but is an actual, provocative presence, confirming its difference both from the museum space, which has lost its sanctity, and from the contextual frame in which the object serves as fetish. Is the show not, then, a gathering of madness in the heart of the private, a knowing acceptance into the domestic unit of diversity and its signs? Aren't the *chambres d'amis* infected by alien presences, without necessarily implicating conviviality with what are called the "legitimate proprietors" of these homes?

Artworks have invaded the public spaces of cities before, becoming at times urban furniture, at times nuclei of provocation or stimulation. In both cases, the urban container is used as a reagent or catalyst, or else serves as a backdrop to the artist's performance. Everything is arranged within a weave of traces made upon a substantially homogeneous surface, even when those traces gnaw and dig more or less deeply into the skin. Such art follows its path in relative security. In the social framework in which we move, it sometimes discovers new and unusual viewpoints, unimagined landscapes, secret recesses, forgotten corners; but since that framework always passes a little beyond the walls of the urban labyrinth, the art can often cross over them without breaking any taboo.

The opposite sensation holds in Ghent. What in public circumstances appears more or less ephemeral, here seems like a chasm, a black hole opening at the threshold of the house, the private space, toward unfathomable abysses hazardous to observe. A visit to "Chambres d'Amis" is not a tourist jaunt, nor even an expedition of exploration; in fact, many of its artists are familiar—Mario Merz and Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth and Daniel Buren, Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham, Jannis Kounellis and Maria Nordman. This journey is something quite different: an investigation of the unknown—of a crime, perhaps, its origins, circumstances, and effects. Within set hours, the visitor follows a map from house to house. Yet the investigation is in vain, for every time the clues lead us to a new site, they fail to tally; the picture never comes together, and in the end we realize that the puzzle for which we thought we had the pieces is actually many puzzles, with each piece sending us off to a different one. What are we actually looking for in the womblike space, hot with sienna, created by Ettore Spalletti and Remo Salvadori in a hallway within which their incongruous objects are like traces of a presence that has not vanished or been volatilized, but instead has fallen inside the volcano over whose dry surface we seem to pass? Jan Vercruysse's installation is a large, black, empty picture frame in a comer facing a bed, and another, smaller one that hangs on a wall and holds a grayish image of an old armchair; on the chair stand a violin and an open book of sheet music, in a position suggesting both rigidity and flexibility—the image is like a nostalgic erotic apparition. But what are we to imagine we've found in this room, except, perhaps, that we have stumbled into a trap whose maker has foreseen that our pleasure arises from the degree of intensity of our involvement? What is the absent presence in the empty room penetrated by Juan Munoz's Lilliputian iron balcony slanting down from the ceiling? Is this something left behind?

What have we come to see here? What have we interrupted?

I have just left the house containing Kazuo Katase's blue room, and my retinas are still reacting to its color. The height of the sun has changed, the world has another hue. The planes of inside and outside interpenetrate in the slide projections and reflected images of Nordman's room, which she has set up as a shop, and here, perhaps more than in the other works, and more didactically; one's eyes are particularly assaulted by the difference of this "thing" in Ghent: how the private projects and maintains its shadow against the transparency of the public, how art seen in this context is elevated to the second power, if we can use that term, and how in consequence it acquires a kind of centripetal force. This is true when it appears very banally, like a well-told joke, as in Jacques Charlier's reconstruction of a typical bourgeois Flemish turn-of-the-century living room, which, however, hides demonic figures behind a curtain—including an androgynous lion tamer in uniform, an irascible guardian of the art world. And it is equally true when the art is presented as a sadistic temple of the intellect, as with Kosuth's baroque installation: a text from Freud on lapses of memory is blown up large, crossed through with heavy black bars, and applied as wallpaper to every room of a psychiatrist's house; colored numbers printed between the lines offer a way to read the text, transforming it into an enigmatic expanded trick. In fact, all the artists have found their own way to confront the narcissism of the private. The second power to which their work is raised, then, is really the sum of two factors of the same quantity—the narcissism of the private and the narcissism of the artist.

The imprudent traveler has no choice but to continue moving through this city of superintimists. The dark shadow of a ballerina arranged by Christian Boltanski in a window visible from the Flor restaurant would ruin one's dinner there—a memento mori, the baby thrown out with the bath water. Michael Buthe's luminously tender living room tries to hold one: "Stay!" Bertrand Lavier's pointillist play on a patterned wallpaper urges one to paranoia: "If there were a blackout and I vanished, would I reappear afterwards on a TV screen?" Stealing into one airy room, one can see the family baby wrapped in Luciano Fabro's long, white sheet, with its jaggedly cut borders. Mario Merz's enormous reptile in stone and thick glass has invaded the entire space in which it stands, immovable, cumbersome, decidedly chthonic. Passing LeWitt's large pyramidal mural, in four gray tones of india ink on a wall embellished by preexisting white classical pilasters, one knows that one is in the atrium of the palace. And what beneficent genius drew the outline of an easel and a blank canvas, using as a ground the white spines of books arranged neatly on a bookcase, and somehow imbuing the light of the things in the room with clarity? (Giulio Paolini.) Or one wonders what cyborg—it was Royden Rabinowitch—designed the dark brown metal sculpture that climbs upward from the floor of a very ordinary room, like a large insect on the wall, its impeccable geometry seeming not from this world.

At a certain point one decides to go without seeing everything, to leave the city its secrets, which remain intact in spite of everything. Even if this weren't so, thanks to Hoet one knows that sooner or later one will want to come back.

CHAMBRES D'AMIS

Rudi Fuchs

Art Monthly, September 1986

The only artists mentioned by name in the Channel 4 News coverage last month of the "Chambres d'Amis" exhibition in Ghent, Belgium, were Mario Merz and the Belgian painter Roger Raveel. The exhibition presented artworks of about fifty artists, not just in a museum (how boring that would be) but in private houses throughout the town. "Yes, Mario is one of the stars here," said the reporter as he entered into somebody's salon to find one of Merz's stone-covered tables, one of his standard forms adapted for the occasion. More houses, more rooms were shown and discussed with the inhabitants and visitors, but the artists' names (Luciano Fabro's work we saw, and the room jointly done by Remo Salvadori and Ettore Spaletti) were not given, as if the artists did not count. I do not think they did. The attraction in this case was not so much the artists as the "event." It even attracted Channel 4 News. And poor Mario Merz was that day's star. The other three Italians had never had one-man shows in London, so they weren't really worth mentioning, even if their rooms looked much better on television than Mario's. [...]

For ten years now Jan Hoet, director of the Ghent Museum for Contemporary Art and organizer of "Chambres d'Amis," has been trying to set up a well-functioning museum in Ghent—a museum with reasonable funding, able to present a well-considered annual program of exhibitions and buy works for its collection. The amount of money available, as I know from my own experience in Eindhoven, does not have to be enormous but has to be stable and steady. There are problems with that in Ghent. A couple of years ago we, Jan Hoet and I had decided to make a joint exhibition of the American artist James Lee Byars. But then Jan Hoet had to pull out at very short notice, creating great problems for me, because his political masters in the city government had suddenly blocked his budget. I do not know why they did this, or what the fight between them and Jan Hoet was about, but pulling out like that is unacceptable by any account. It shows the governmental caprice Jan Hoet is up against.

Now everybody in Ghent, including the City Council, seems to be overjoyed with "Chambres d'Amis": the show that this summer puts the city in the center of popular artistic attention; extensive coverage in international newspapers, on television, even on the reticent British TV. I believe Jan Hoet makes an exhibition like that almost out of desperation—and with strategy. He hopes that the public (and the media) success of "Chambres d'Amis" will convince his City Council that contemporary art is important and worthwhile and that they should provide funds for his museum and guarantee its continuation. I hope that they will do that

and opt for the stability of art instead of the day's success. But "Chambres d'Amis" may also prove the stick with which they will beat him. Politicians thrive on publicity. They love grand occasions that bring out the media, and so, in general, do sponsors. Jan Hoet found the money for "Chambres d'Amis" from public and corporate sources with relative ease. But as a "normal" museum is less "spectacular" than an event like "Chambres d'Amis," his councilors might well tell him to organize more of the same: not the classic museum but the grand show is the way to go, then you will not find public applause and sponsors' money. It would be disastrous if that were to happen.

Unfortunately, both the way in which "Chambres d'Amis" was organized and its motivation might give rise to such a response on the part of the politicians of Ghent. In various interviews, Jan Hoet, apart from criticizing other museum directors for not having innovative ideas, has said that art should be brought directly to the people. In saying that, he is in danger of feeding the popular notion that art museums are boring and elitist. "Chambres d'Amis" brings art to the more startling surroundings of someone's private room, away from the neutral space of the museum; and many artists, Jan Hoet explains, rose to the occasion and made very special works. The public, of course, followed him. The Channel 4 report showed a girl saying how she did not go much to museums because they were so stuffy, but this she loved. This is like saying that chicken is better because it is not turkey.

The point is, of course, that the museum somehow is a standard, a continuous and public point of reference, whereas an exhibition like "Chambres d'Amis," however attractive (admittedly it included some beautiful works), is an incident. It falls from heaven like rain and then dries up and becomes invisible. The museum is a standard because, among other things, its spatial and architectural structure, developed over decades in view of art's necessities, does not push art but simply holds it. "Chambres d'Amis" brought into private rooms artists whose work is by its nature adaptable to such situations. Because the exhibition is proclaimed as a "great adventure" (by Jan Hoet himself), all these artists now look more adventurous than others who have developed differently: artists such as Richard Long, Georg Baselitz, Per Kirkeby, Gerhard Richter, Gilbert & George, A. R. Penck, Arnulf Rainer, Gunter Brus, Markus Luperts, Jan Dibbets, Donald Judd, and many more. It is not impossible for them to bring some of their work into somebody's room, but to do so would make no sense—there is no particular need. But does that need exist for Mario Merz or Janniz Kounellis or Luciano Fabro? Of course not. Present art is in no way concerned with change of place or the separation between those who work here and those who work there. It is not concerned with incidental decoration. Art needs the common ground of dialogue and exchange for which, I believe, the museum is the appropriate place. The private room is a private matter. After all, art can be bought at all prices. Surely Jan Hoet, too, must believe that.

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EXHIBITION

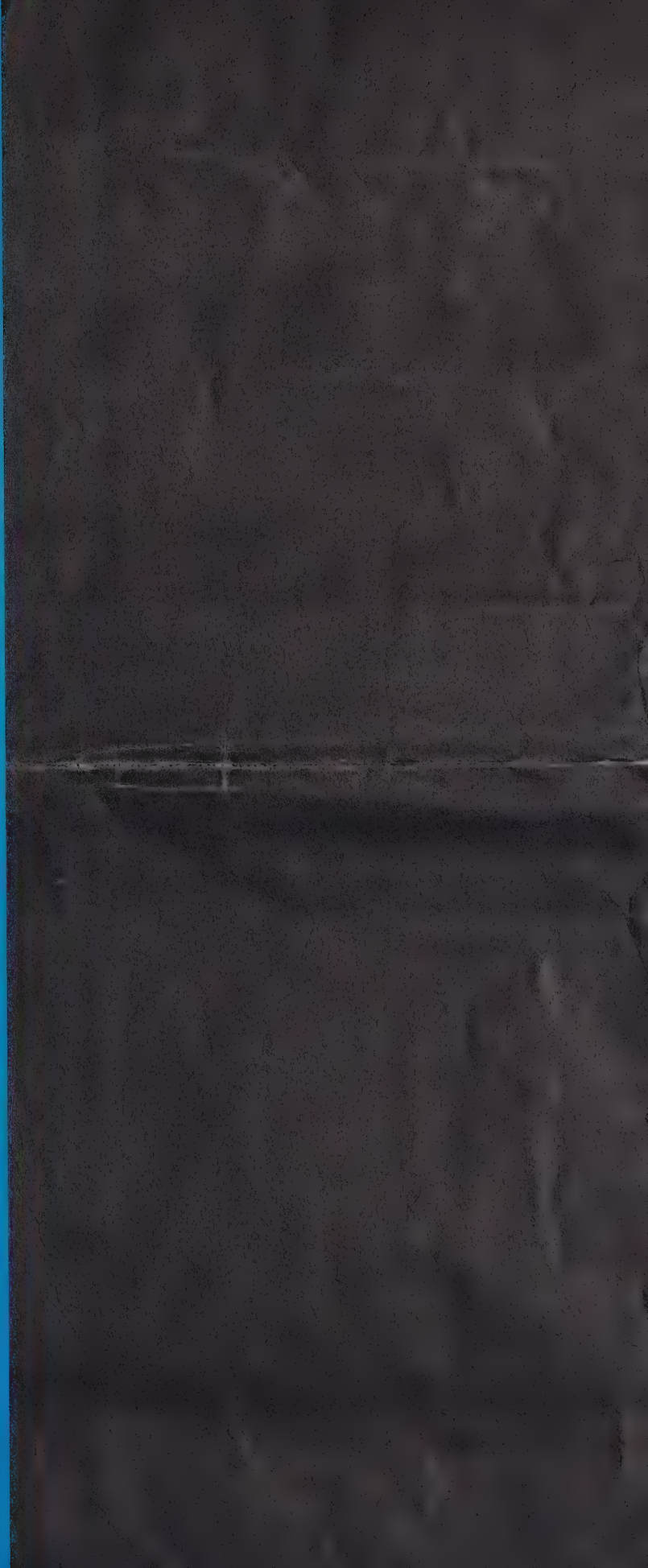
Second Havana Biennial

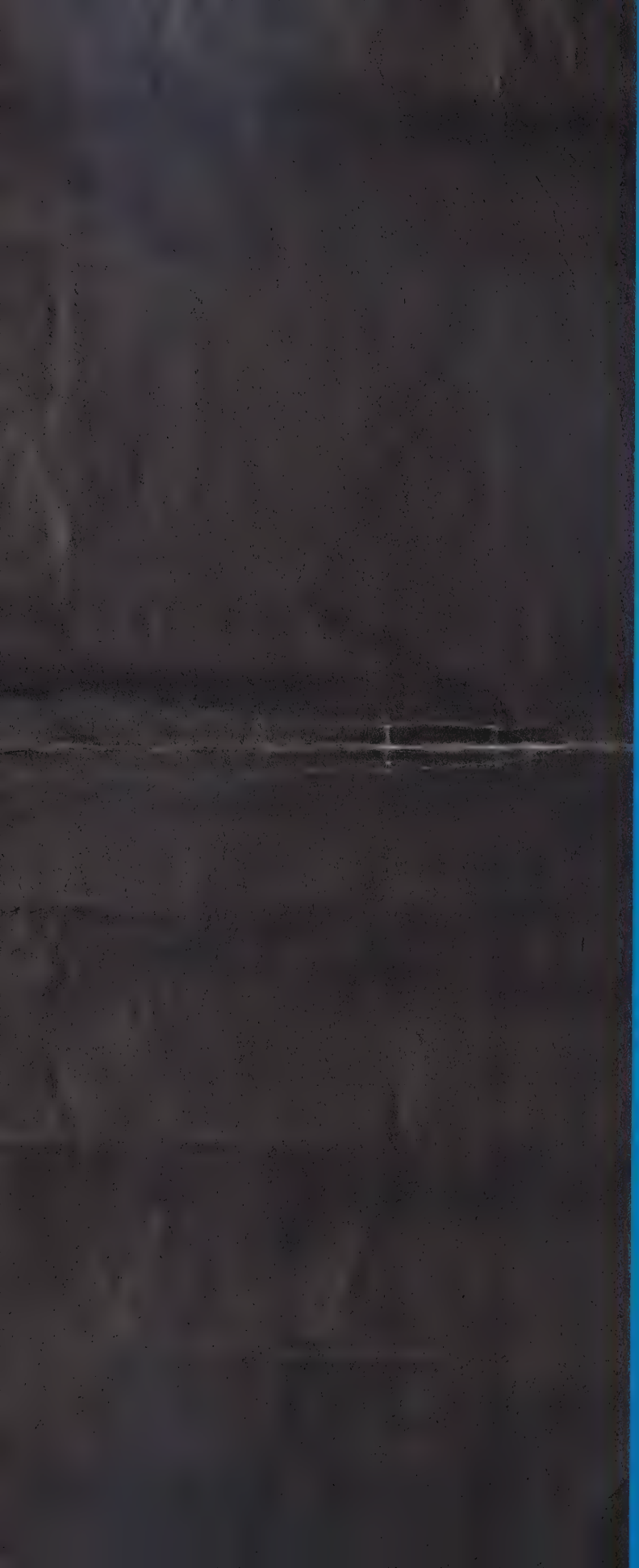
LOCATION

Wifredo Lam Center and other venues, Havana

DATE

26 November–31 December 1986





CURATORS

Staff of the Wifredo Lam Center, notably Gerardo Mosquera and Lilian Llanes Godoy

ITINERARY

None

ARTISTS

Prize-winning artists among the 690 exhibitors include José Bedia, Carlos Capelán, Alberto Chissano, Joren Chowdhury, Juan Francisco Elso, Marina Gutiérrez, Luis Maestro, Manuel Mendive, Antonio Ole, Marta Palau, Tomás Sánchez, Dagnoko Nene Tina, José Tolo

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Martinique, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

CATALOG

Segunda Bienal de la Habana. *Havana*: Centro Wifredo Lam, 1986

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 690
Number of works: 2,451
Attendance: ca. 300,000

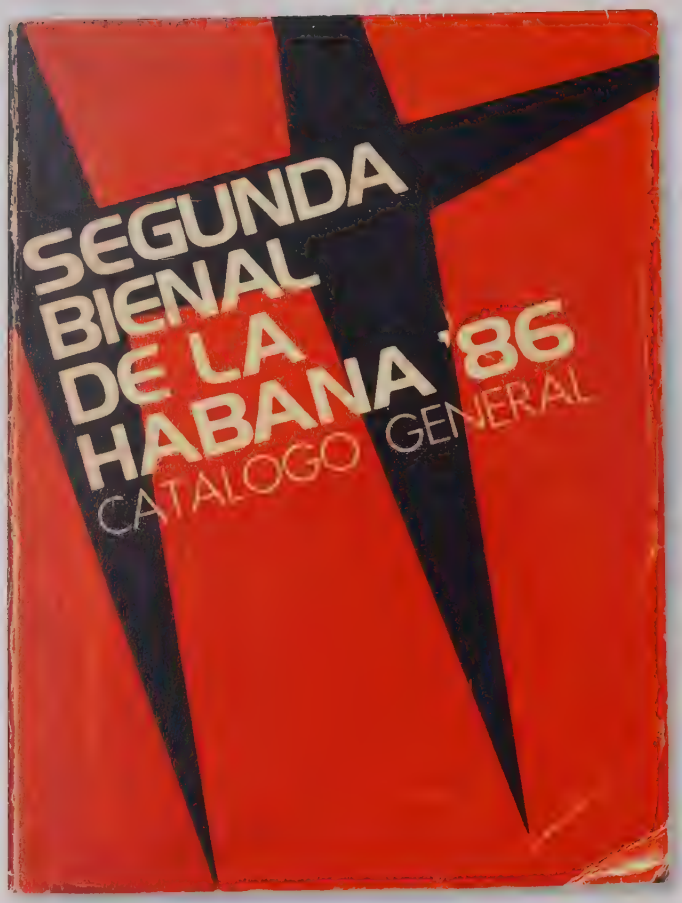
The Second Havana Biennial was the first to approximate the goal for which this exhibition was created, to display art from across the Third World. The only biennial presented in a Socialist country, it was funded by the Cuban government as part of a policy intended to strengthen the country's cultural prominence in Latin America and among postcolonial nations. But beyond particular political goals, the Havana Biennial developed the model for the international biennials that would expand through the next decade—shows located outside the Euro-American centers, with exhibition sites and events dispersed in an urban area, engaged with real world and artistic issues through a range of discursive activities.

The Havana Biennial was the primary project of the Wifredo Lam Center. Created in 1983 as an initiative of Fidel Castro, the center was dedicated to perpetuating knowledge of this important Cuban painter and to researching, promoting and exhibiting the work of Third World artists. In directing its efforts toward art from outside Europe and North America, it sought to establish an international artistic network apart from that dominated by the commercial art system. With little organizational time and limited resources, the First Havana Biennial in 1984 was confined largely to Latin American and Caribbean art. It nonetheless included more than 2,000 works by 835 artists from twenty-one countries. The audience of 200,000 was admitted without charge.

The Second Biennial was led by the center's new director, Llilian Llanes Godoy, whose vision, organizational ability, and political skill guided the exhibition through its next five versions. It was Llanes who broadened the Havana Biennial beyond a self-contained exhibition to become a dynamic social space, bringing together artists and citizens through a variety of events and activities. The first biennial appropriately held a conference on the work of Wifredo Lam, and the second assembled scholars and artists on the theme of the art of the Caribbean. But there also was an ambitious program of workshops, discussions, meetings and performances around the city, including a large public salsa concert the first week. Through its run the second biennial attracted an audience fifty percent larger than two years before, with five thousand people attending the opening night festivities.

The curatorial effort was directed by Gerardo Mosquera, the island's most well-known art critic. Mosquera had written the catalog for the important 1981 exhibition, "Volumen Uno," and was an enthusiastic advocate for the new generation of Cuban artists. The center had sent out an international call for participants, and Mosquera and his team expanded the range of the show to include art from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. With more than 2,400 works by 690 artists from fifty-seven countries, it also exceeded the first biennial in size. In addition to the primary exhibition in the National Museum, there were forty-five other shows around the city. These included exhibitions of "Latin American Masters," contemporary art from India, naive painting from the Solentiname islands in Nicaragua, and "Over the Blockade," which presented pieces sent in solidarity by well-known U.S. artists.

Despite its unique context and innovative structure, the Second Havana Biennial essentially was a report on current artistic practice across the Third World, albeit a survey mounted without the art market filter of other international exhibitions. It also maintained the conservative practice of giving prizes selected by a distinguished jury. The Third Havana Biennial eliminated such prizes as inconsistent with the collective spirit of the project, and adopted a thematic organizing principle instead of an emphasis on national representation. With more theoretically slanted conferences, more wide-ranging exhibitions and events, and a tighter curatorial structure, it developed the model initiated in 1984 toward that of the familiar international biennials of our time.



← Cover of the catalog for the Second Havana Biennial, 1986.

↓ Boards announcing the participating countries from three continents (Africa, Asia, and the Americas) in the Second Havana Biennial.

→ View of banners showing the logo designed after Wifredo Lam; they were placed around Havana to announce the Biennial.

↘ View of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), Havana, 1986.

↘↘ A colorful bulletin board advertising talks on 26 November, 1986, at the Second Havana Biennial. Scheduled conferences included one on "contemporary art criticism," a conference about "new art in Boston," with Rachel Weiss and Henry Isaac, another on "social murals in the USA," and an "International Writers Meeting" at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA).

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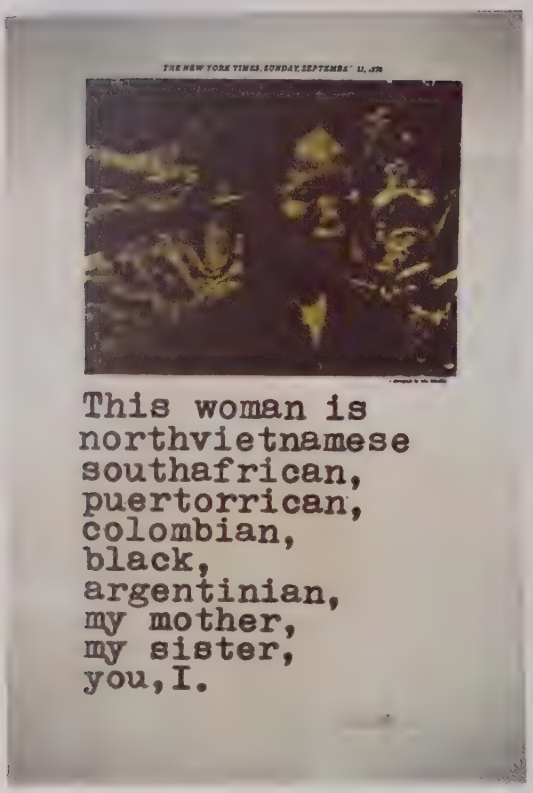
26 de NOVIEMBRE

⇑ ⇒ Flavio Garciandía's *The Marco Polo Syndrome*, a series of paintings rendered in acrylic and glitter that depict the Cuban comics character Elpidio Valdés undertaking a mysterious journey. The images also borrow from the decor of Chinese restaurants and can be read as a critique of the idea of the "exotic," and the role of the explorer.

↑ A work by Grupo Puré, comprising the artists Lázaro Saavedra Gonzalez, Ciro Quintana Gutiérrez, Ana Albertina Delgado, and Ermy Taño.

→ Humberto Castro's *The Fall of Icarus II*, consisting of three life-sized figurative sculptures, a bed of broken mirrors, and painted panels.



↑ Argentine artist Liliana Porter showed *This is a Woman*, a work from 1970 in which the central image is taken from *The New York Times*. It shows an elderly Vietnamese woman terror-struck as an M1 American rifle is pointed at her head.

→ Juan Francisco Elso Padilla's *Por América* (*For America*), a three-quarter sized wooden effigy of Jose Marti, the popular Cuban hero of national independence. Elso Padilla showed Marti as a barefoot figure, clad in mud and wielding a machete, and pierced by red and green darts symbolizing the blood of conflict and the fertility of rebirth. The work was such an unorthodox representation of the national hero that Elso Padilla was denied the prize that an international jury wanted to award it at the Second Havana Biennial.

↑ Cuban artist Manuel Mendive's performance *Life*, for which he was awarded an International Prize at the Biennial. Mendive's performance featured dancers painted with colored dots and markings, and drew on a ritual dance native to the Yoruba tradition.

→ Visitors looking at Ruben Torres Llorca's *I've Got You Under My Skin*, at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana.

↘ A work by Juan Boza Sánchez, a Cuban artist who had emigrated to the United States in 1980.

Paintings created as part of a popular art workshop run by Ernesto Cardena on the Solentiname islands. Cardena was the Sandinista Minister of Culture in Nicaragua, as well as an ordained Catholic priest. He had settled on the islands in the mid-1960s, before establishing an artists' colony there.

OPENING SPEECH FOR THE 2ND HAVANA BIENNIAL

Ida Rodriguez Prampolini (the President of the International Jury)
1986 Havana Biennial News Bulletin no. 8, 30 November 1986

The thrust behind this 2nd Biennial, which has called on countries from the so-called Third World to consider their artistic output, has been for us to get to know each other; we're all bound by similar economic, political, and social problems that prevent us from engaging the unbound potential of our cultural expression. What differentiates us are the roots from where we come, which can only be strengthened with respect and fair appraisal.

All of us who make up the jury are conscious that the situation in which artists find themselves in the various countries participating in this exhibition is different. In some cases, culture exists as a public good to which some have the right and access, though not the majority; in other cases, cultural expressions are a way of protecting the country's own identity, a search for ways of preserving their authenticity, and ultimately, for their culture to survive.

Written or visual information means access to an art world whose most valid contributions, within the confused concept of a "universal contemporary," are those that emerge from centers of power, particularly those of capitalist countries. Bearing this in mind, Latin America is rather privileged, and among our countries certainly Cuba, which despite the economic limitations it is currently undergoing, has a system for supporting artists like nowhere else, looking out for them and integrating them within the whole of popular culture.

The high standard of Cuban artworks that we have judged up to now is reflected in the number of pieces that have made it to the list of finalists in our voting.

[Cuba's] privileged circumstance is not the case in most of Latin America, and even less in Asia and Africa.

In many of the countries in these continents, acquiring materials and the impossibility of getting information are a barrier to reaching something that, clumsily, is considered to be up to date, "to be contemporary," as per the parameters we've outlined above. But to be contemporary should be considered in relation to the realities of each region and its authentic and potential development.

The Havana Biennial's goals, as its official announcement states, are to defend and search for the most authentic forms of visual production, and to present the very best of these regions' current artistic creations, in order to "deepen knowledge of them and contribute to their promotion."

The Havana Biennial should be conceived as the way toward sharing our mutual knowledge, toward integrating and reinforcing the cultural survival of the countries presenting their output. We are convinced that if [the Biennial] is given this responsibility, the mere fact of being selected to participate in it will, in the future, be the honest equivalent to an award.

CATALOG STATEMENT

Herrera Ysla
Segunda Bienal de la Habana (exh. cat.), 1986

The Organizing Committee for the 2nd Havana Biennial wanted to put together an exhibition that would feature some of the key artists from each of our regions—those whose aesthetic development has held a privileged place within the general contemporary art scene in each of their respective countries, as well as unquestionable recognition within the complex and varied field of international competition.

The show is mainly composed of artists from Latin America, some of whom received awards in the last edition of the Havana Biennial: the degree to which their artistic proposals have developed can be seen both conceptually as well as in the style and media of expression. In others, one can detect a continuity that is proof of a body of work established on the recognizable signs of a personal, authentic, and owned language, even in the most minute technical details, and that the artist considers it an unquestionable conquest in order to keep going in certain paths and sure ways.

Latin American art—even if the adjective is still difficult to take in within the landscape of the global culture in Our America—is perfectly healthy, ready not just to face the question of the specific realities which are its contexts, but also to take on board and re-purpose anything that might emerge and produce an artistic language or idea in any part of the world, and to incorporate it into the large multiplicity of characters and sense of unity that we simultaneously represent. Latin America, single unit and multiplicity, as it's been called, can be spotted in the work of these artists, even if we still have to deal with and express topics, issues, and problems. It's not easy to draw definitive conclusions about the future of our art, even after enjoying going through this exhibition which features more than two hundred works, but we have achieved part of the journey toward the identity that the future will demand of us.

Due to current problems of information and communication, it hasn't been possible to include the work of artists from the other geographic and cultural areas that make up the great confluence–meeting at Havana. A rigorous selection involves more than just being up to date on trends, activity, and individual names that we might discover in other international events, specialized publications, and magazines. It's necessary to go straight to the source, to have an understanding of texts and contexts, and to master the cultural and social weft of the work's own birth and development. And this is something that we should accomplish over the next few years, in order to guarantee true understanding between cultures and artistic expressions with a lot in common, both in their roots and their branches.

This exhibition enhances the 2nd Havana Biennial and commits us to go forward through that path of interexchange. Both specialists and the public will come into contact with a big picture of art that has now earned, in its own right, its own voice within the universal choir of culture.

HAVANA, 1986

Dore Ashton

Arts Magazine, February 1987

[...] More than one visiting critic from the Western world commented on the exceptionally high quality of the Cuban exhibition. "We have no 'isms' here," boasts the Culture Minister, the shrewd and effective Armando Hart Davalos. "Our culture is antischematic and antidogmatic." If the works of the young Cuban visual artists are a fair indication, Hart's claim is valid. Although almost all Cuban artists and writers refer to "Nuestra America" (Our America) as a rich amalgam defined by Jose Marti, distinct from the other America (New York, in which Marti wrote and lived and made certain acute observations), they are far from indifferent to the mood and idiom deriving largely from New York. The support system of the Cuban state has been exceptionally generous, allowing young Cuban painters, sculptors, and installation artists ample latitude. With it, they have managed to absorb a striking variety of contemporary techniques, and several of them, among them Gustavo Perez Acosta, still in his twenties, and Tomas Sanchez, slightly older, make a very strong showing in the larger Biennial.

The city of Havana sprawls out with its two million inhabitants into village enclaves with tropical flora abounding. Known as municipalities, each of these has its own art center and library. In addition, an astonishing number of cultural institutions are embedded in the heart of the city, ranging from the Casa de la Americas with its two buildings and galleries, and its numerous artistic programs amply housed, to smaller sites for special exhibitions, such as the research institute, the Wilfredo Center, dedicated to documenting the art of the Third World, and the Biennial with impressive zeal. The opening week of the Biennial festivities overlapped the Third Party Congress, during which Castro announced the bad news that the economic situation, already close to desperate, would sink still farther. When asked how this would affect the grand cultural program, Minister Hart instantly replied not at all. It would not affect the principle.

For the Biennial, Havana was festooned with banners, locating the more than fifty special exhibitions all over town. In Old Havana, these exhibitions took place in newly restored colonial buildings—some palatial and some former warehouses, but all very elegant and perfect for exhibiting art—including the North American contribution called "In Spite of the Blockade," a show of works donated by North American artists to demonstrate their disapproval of United States foreign policy.

The special exhibitions were well chosen, ranging from a large solo show of the Cuban painter Manuel Mendive in his own municipality, to shows by Third World artists of international renown. They included Edgar Negret, the elegant and airy abstract sculptor who lived for a while in New York before returning to his native Colombia; Hervé Télémaque, the Haitian painter who also spent student years in New York before repairing to Paris, where his work is highly regarded for its fusion of sophisticated Pop with Haitian motifs; and Nja Mahdaoui, an absolutely masterful Tunisian artist whose intelligent and sensitive play with abstract motifs and calligraphic shapes on parchment and paper were widely admired. There were several group shows from individual countries; most notable were the works from Nigeria, in which the carving of Bisi Fakeye, a remarkable artist who has managed to draw from the classic tradition a distinctive and contemporary style, towered over the work of the others.

In the Biennial itself, the enormous quantity defies reviewing and there can be no generalizations. Perhaps the only point worth making is that there is a lot more transcultural exchange than the arguments of Third World commentators in general would suggest. The give and take is widespread between the West and its former colonies, and perhaps the issue of identity versus universality is more complex than the organizers believe. Art seems to circle and spiral. It suffuses itself in occult ways. Take, for instance, the paintings by G. Y. Giri from India. They are painted in high, fresh colors that are thinly painted and strongly reminiscent of Matisse. But then, Matisse himself got his ideas about color and space from many sources, not the least of them Indian miniatures. Or, consider the performance art of the Puerto Rican, Antonio Martorell: He was influenced, he says, by the Bread and Puppet Theater of the United States, which in turn drew upon the radical German theater tradition. On the other hand, the influence of Wilfredo Lam, Cuba's most distinguished historical figure in modern art, spreads broadly throughout Latin America. But oddly enough, it is often filtered through the eyes of others both in Europe and the United States. His most famous painting, *The Jungle*, hung for years in a place of honor in the Museum of Modern Art, where generations of painters from all over the world were able to assimilate it, thereby absorbing, in turn, some of the magical transformation that Picasso was able to incite in Lam himself. When the Europeans bypassed their own familiar culture in order to drink at the sources of so-called primitive art, they transformed and, to use Nietzsche's term, transvaluated what they borrowed in ways that are far less obvious than, for instance, the Museum of Modern Art seemed to think in its disputed primitive show two years ago.

The issues of national identity, influence, and profound cultural heritage are still of paramount interest. Seeing these hundreds of works from countries at various stages of development (a term they themselves use rather cavalierly, almost always meaning economic development, but often getting into very fuzzy distinctions that have little concrete support) makes one feel like a spectator at a four-dimensional chess game, in which a move at any of the multiple levels changes the whole configuration of the game. The need for increasingly precise discussion was evident in the highly interesting symposium sponsored by the Wilfredo Lam Center over a period of three days during the opening week's festivities. The theme was "The Visual Arts of the Caribbean," and the ideas that were broached repeatedly circled around the problem of traditional versus contemporary art, and national or ethnic identity versus

universality. The existence of dramatic social and political problems in various Caribbean nations—problems always associated in one way or another with neocolonialism—conditioned the entire conference. Speakers ranging from the distinguished Yale anthropologist Robert Farris Thompson, to the young critic Christian Bracy from the small French colony of Guadeloupe, had to come to terms with the kind of influence that is sometimes condensed into the unsatisfactory concept of "cultural imperialism." Thompson, whose iconoclastic style is always vastly refreshing, did offer a note of optimism when he insisted that cultural traces run deeper than most of us think, and that not even politics can overwhelm them. "Borscht will always be with us," he said as he expatiated on his notion of the "microdot" that remains of African classical culture in the black popular arts and dances of the whole Western hemisphere. Bracy ranged through the history of modern art from Cézanne to de Kooning, but placed special emphasis (of course, it is exaggerated and not quite accurate) on Pollock's derivation from the American Indians and their sand painting—an art, he said, that in the 19th century, would be considered "savage." Much of the discourse during the three-day meeting either directly or indirectly alluded to the ethnocentricity that mars Western thinking, and demanded, either politely or with passion, intellectual redress. Nothing could serve the purpose better than the comprehensive nature of the Biennial despite its apparent flaws. One of these is that there seems to be a wide disparity in the selection methods, so that a country with a relatively high degree of international sophistication, such as Brazil, was not adequately represented. However, it does enable Third World artists to encounter each other, and it serves to bring some flexibility into an increasingly nationalistic world, breaking down deleterious barriers into simple human understanding.

LA SEGUNDA BIENAL DE LA HABANAL

Luis Camnitzer

Arte En Colombia, May 1987

With a plethora of biennials throughout the world, it is worth considering whether it makes sense to add another to the repertoire, particularly in Latin America, given the economic situation in our countries. Cuba had already joined the ranks with a First Biennial dedicated to Latin American art two years ago. The second edition, this time dedicated to the Third World, took place in December 1986. Both biennials were huge and aimed to be exhaustive. Having seen the two, my response to the opening question is positive. The Havana Biennial as an institution is no provincial imitation of the numerous and ever-expanding exhibitions staged by the international art market along the lines of the Venice Biennale. Although the Venetian model exerts an influence and, even in its second edition, Cuba has yet to fully achieve an identity of its own, the organizers' aspirations combined with conclusions drawn from the biennials themselves are indicative of the importance that the Havana Biennial could have in the future.

As an institution, the Havana Biennial aims to present an alternative forum to the international biennials. In order to exhibit in the mainstream biennials, artists from Latin America and other Third World countries must pass through a series of acceptability filters (aesthetic, political, biographical, etc.) which often directly contradict those artists' goals and the needs their art hopes to satisfy. At other times they require a mastery of the exact game rules which cultural differences and lack of money make impossible for us to achieve. Recent history reveals some clear examples. The next Kassel Documenta so far promises the inclusion of just one Latin American artist, Chile's Alfredo Jaar. The last Venice Biennale invited only three Latin Americans to exhibit in its aperto section: Jaar again, Cuba's Flavio Garciandia, and Puerto Rico's Rene Santos. Only one Latin American, the Brazilian Antonio Dias, participated in the inaugural exhibition following the expansion of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Cuba is, therefore, attempting to create an equally big or even bigger focus of interest, using a scale of values more in keeping with what we are doing, and free from the obligation to follow international trends just to be able to operate outside our own regions. What gives the Cuban Biennial its originality is that, rather than just another trade fair, it is an exhibition laboratory: a place where artists can gauge the success of their artistic investigations without having to compete for a position in the market. The general picture that emerges from the huge amount of work exhibited, including the small contributions of those works that were not entirely successful, is worth more than the star quality of any individual artist. It is in this area that both biennials have failed to achieve absolute coherence, however. Both have awarded prizes, maintaining the competitivity and individualism of the traditional competitions and obscuring the more interesting and interactive aspirations that justify the creation of the biennial at this particular moment in time.

The problems of the First Biennial were rooted in various issues. One was a lack of rigor, as much in the selection process itself as in the definition of selection criteria. The other was the division along national lines in a Biennial whose main focus could have been the definition of a common regional language over and above the arbitrary frontiers that divide the continent. Finally, there was the ideological conflict between, on the one hand, what aspired to be an objective analytical study of that common language and, on the other, the race for a prize, with all its attendant implications. The presence of 2,200 works by more than eight hundred artists managed to conceal these flaws and helped provide a representative panorama of the Latin American continent, together with enough information to form the basis of a subsequent project. Following such a Biennial, Latin American artists had no choice but to stop either working in a vacuum or producing work based on external influences. We saw the beginnings of a

regional referencing process which could, through subsequent biennials, lead to a Latin American continental identity essential to our cultural independence.

In a way, the Second Biennial failed to fulfill that promise because of a change of focus. The expansion to include the Third World introduced new elements that interfered with the original concept. The prizes and the division by nation were continued. The size was broadly the same (2,500 works), although only seven hundred artists were invited. This ensured each artist greater representation and, though it did little to improve the quality overall, it did make the exhibition more interesting. Changes were made to the selection process which, given time, will ensure stricter controls over shipment of work, once the Biennial becomes more established and international contacts adjust accordingly.

But it is this change of focus that merits further discussion. With the experience of only one Biennial behind them—an important, promising, and imperfect Biennial—it seemed logical to continue along similar lines, correcting mistakes and developing the institution within the framework of the original concept. The First Biennial had already won its position as the most important artistic event in Latin America. There was room to improve it, not change it. The Second Biennial instead augured a return to the drawing board and the risk of an amateurism that could have had fatal consequences for the future. Fortunately, it turned out differently.

That is not to say that the Second Biennial was without its problems. It is very difficult to define precisely what is the Third World, which countries are included and which are not. Using either Bandung's concept of an economic division, or the racist North American criteria (that the Third World is, essentially, non-white), the distinction is never clear-cut and there are always omissions and inclusions that defy explanation. Given that the sixty countries taking part have cultures and definitions of art which are incredibly diverse, and sometimes mutually antagonistic, it is very difficult, with limited financial resources, to assemble the ideal selection panels capable of accurately selecting high-level representative works. In the international art market there is at least a certain consensus as to what constitutes high level, but here no such consensus exists and, therefore, the awarding of prizes was, not only ideologically problematic, but totally gratuitous and arbitrary. In their report to the organizing body, the jurors underlined this problem as one that needed to be examined and possibly revised in future biennials. Equally, Cuba's isolation, together with the economic situation of many of the participating countries, made it very difficult to achieve a balanced exhibition. The whole of Asia was represented by 136 works, ninety-one of which were from India; while Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico each had more than two hundred works exhibited.

Despite all these problems, a viewing of the Second Biennial made clear that the change of focus was a positive move. The dividing of the exhibition along national lines was continued, but in this Biennial it made sense, facilitating an understanding of the specific and diverse difficulties each country experiences in maintaining traditions and creating identities in the face of imported pressures. Against this background, Latin America, though divided into its respective nations, takes shape as a separate block, defined less by a plastic language and more as the product of historical location in relation to art, the consequence of a colonization process. We long ago internalized the game rules of international art, while many of the other countries still bear the evidence of trauma caused by current or recent pressures. The message of the majority of the Latin American works is: this is art, or worse, this warrants a prize. Cambodia, on the other hand, represented by a series of papier-mâché masks possibly made for the tourist trade, offers the message: "We don't really know what it is that you call art, but let's see if this works." Meanwhile, a half-Surrealist, mostly abstract painting from Kuwait (Khalifa Al-Oatab), but with a breast hidden away, tells more of the fear of being accused of creating pornography.

Many countries have submitted works that evidently seek to unite two worlds, that of a nation's own past and the present it has on loan (usually at a high rate of interest). Many of the results might seem pitiful if viewed in terms of what we class as high level; nonetheless, their presence obliges us to consider whether they are really pitiful or simply a reflection of our own attitudes. Two significant achievements have, therefore, come out of the Second Havana Biennial and its change of focus. On the one hand, it has ensured that Latin America continues to be perceived as a regional bloc and that what was begun in the previous Biennial has therefore been achieved. On the other, it puts that perception into a frame of reference which is more complex and interesting than that of the Venice Biennale. Instead of being concerned with how to break into the art market, it is concerned with the way in which culture is created and the obstacles inherent in that. It is in the company of these other countries that the extent of our colonialization becomes clear, as well as the extent of our arrogance as a region. As a bloc in this Biennial, we are the most aware and concerned for the success of an exhibition of this kind.

17

EXHIBITION

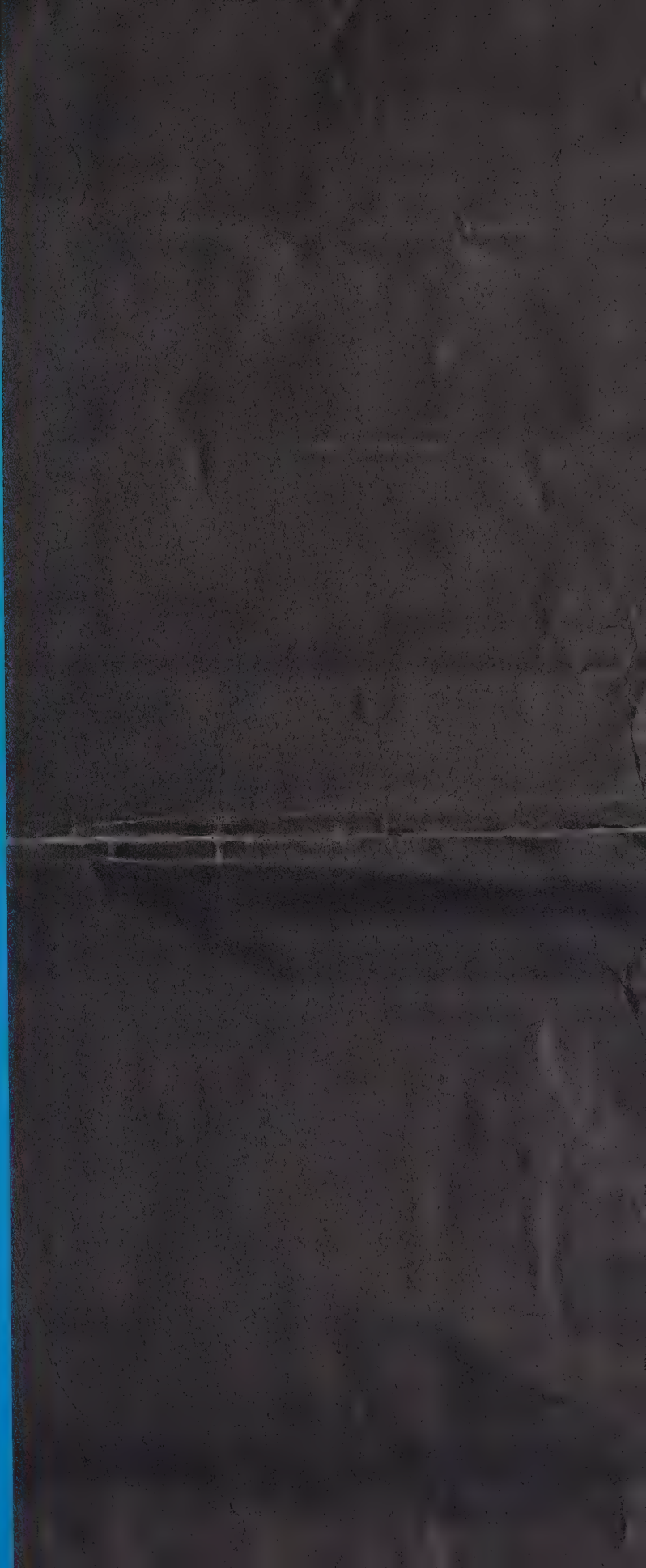
Freeze

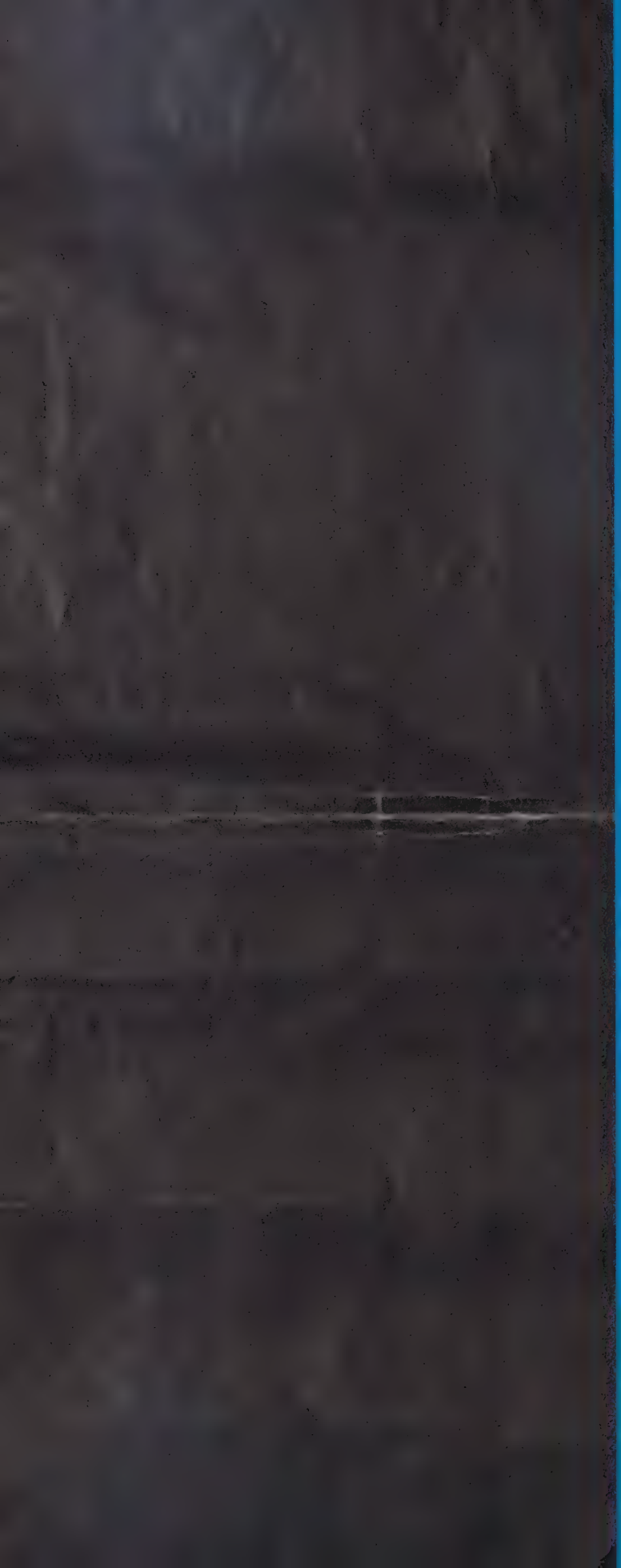
LOCATION

PLA Building,
Docklands,
London

DATE

Part I:
6–22 August 1988
Part II:
27 August–
12 October 1988
Part III:
ending 29
September 1988





CURATOR
Damien Hirst

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Steven Adamson, Angela Bullock, Mat Collishaw, Ian Davenport, Angus Fairhurst, Anya Gallaccio, Damien Hirst, Gary Hume, Michael Landy, Abigail Lane, Sarah Lucas, Lola Meredith-Vula, Richard Patterson, Simon Patterson, Stephen Park, Fiona Rae

EXHIBITION CATALOG
Freeze. London: Olympia and York Canary Wharf and Docklands Development Corporation, 1988. With essay by *Ian Jeffrey*.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 16
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

Organized by second-year art student Damien Hirst, "Freeze" is legendary as the originating moment of the "Young British Artists" ("YBAs"), a group that rose to prominence with the support of collector Charles Saatchi. Despite the fact that many of the YBAs were not in "Freeze," the show has been seen as having played a founding role similar to that of many artist-organized exhibitions in the history of early modern art. The primacy of Hirst's entrepreneurship and marketing ties "Freeze" to its time, to the credo of self-help and personal initiative promoted during the Thatcher years.

Most of those exhibiting in "Freeze" were current or recently graduated art students at Goldsmiths' College. Here the innovative curriculum eliminated divisions between disciplines, and instructors such as Richard Wentworth and Michael Craig-Martin, emphasized an art of articulate conceptualization. Craig-Martin encouraged professional initiative among his students, and connected them with important figures in the London art-world. Among those whom he encouraged to visit "Freeze" were Nicholas Serota, who became director of the Tate during the show, and Norman Rosenthal of the Royal Academy. The tale of Damien Hirst's taking them personally to the exhibition is a highlight of "Freeze" folklore.

"Freeze" was mounted in three parts over two months, with changing works by the same artists. It was open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 7 p.m. Hirst had obtained from the London Docklands Development Corporation the use of an empty administrative building in an industrial area slated for commercial development. The catalog was funded by Olympia and York, which was constructing nearby Canary Wharf. The artists spent weeks cleaning the building, and the space housing their exhibition evoked the white cube aesthetic of the Saatchi Collection's renovated warehouse in St. John's Wood, in northeast London, where works by many "Freeze" artists would find a home. The same professional look characterized the catalog designed by Tony Arefin, which featured color plates for every artist in the show. (It was printed before the work of Dominic Denis could be removed, after he was dropped from the project.)

The exhibition took its name from the catalog description of Mat Collishaw's *Bullet Hole*, a multiple light box display of a medical photograph of a wound delivered by an ice pick: "dedicated to a moment of impact, a preserved now, a freeze-frame." The essay was written by the head of art history at Goldsmiths', Ian Jeffrey. The catalog was distributed to bookstores and galleries, and the BBC covered the exhibition, which was aired on television the following year. With corporate funding, a striking space, an elegant catalog, and wide-ranging promotion, the show seemed more of a professional operation than a student exhibition. The Development Corporation's sponsorship even required that the exhibition benefit the community, so there were school group visits to the last segment of the show, where Hirst's first spot paintings were painted directly on the wall.

"Freeze" led to a series of well-attended group shows in 1990 in other disused industrial spaces in London. The first was "Modern Medicine," organized by Hirst, Carl Freedman and Billie Sellman in a former biscuit factory in Bermondsey. "Gambler" followed at the same site, with Charles Saatchi purchasing Hirst's installation of a rotting cow head and electrified flies. And back in Docklands, Sarah Lucas and Henry Bond curated the immense "East County Yard Show." Commercial success followed in the 1990s, as did rising international and local attention. In 1992, the Saatchi Gallery mounted the first of three "Young British Artists" exhibitions, and Charles Saatchi's efforts culminated in the controversial 1997 Royal Academy show of his collection, "Sensation." Through the decade contemporary British art helped to reinvigorate London as a creative capital, a place of exciting cultural opportunities surrounding an expanding financial center. And anticipating it all was the ambition and energy of "Freeze."

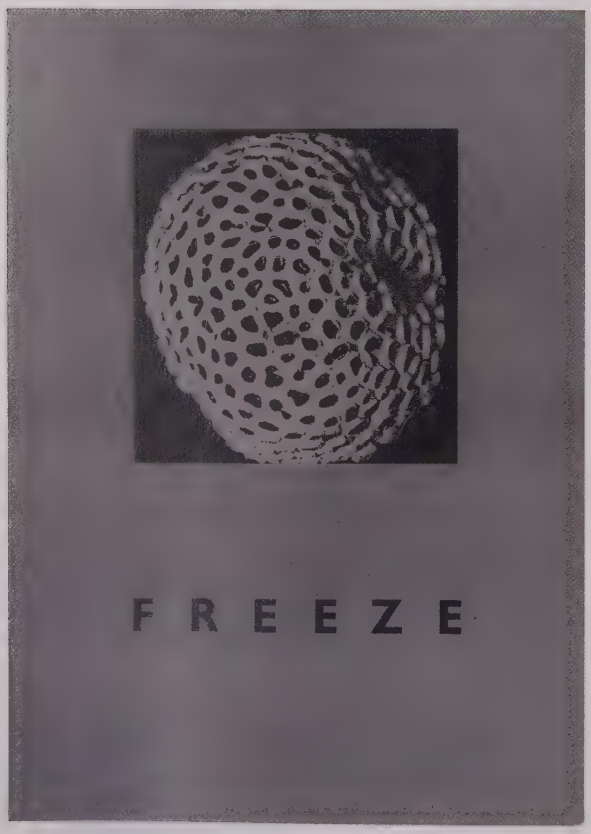
← Cover of the *Freeze* catalog.

↙ Mat Collishaw designed the silver invitation card to "Freeze," which featured an image of a piece of coral.

↓ The reverse side of the invitation card to the "Freeze" exhibition, giving details of the first two parts of the exhibition. The third part was unplanned and was the result of the artists being given the space for longer than expected.

→ The outside of the "Freeze" building at Surrey Docks, which was a former gymnasium belonging to the Port Authority of London.

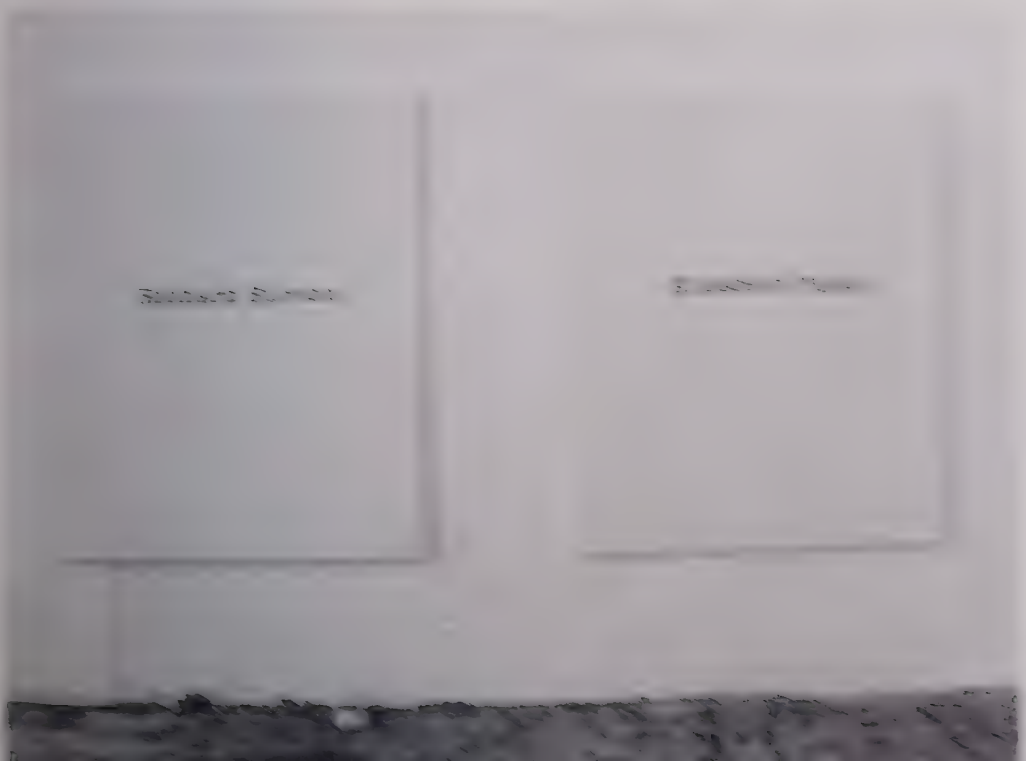
↘ During the installation of the show, with (from second left) Michael Landy, Steven Adamson, Angela Bulloch, Sarah Lucas, and Damien Hirst; at the back, Gary Hume and Mat Collishaw.



Skillion

↑ View of "Freeze," part 1. On the wall is Michael Landy's *Sovereign* and a work by Sarah Lucas (in the foreground).

→ View of "Freeze," part 1, showing photo work by Lala Meredith-Vula, with Michael Landy's *Sovereign* and Sarah Lucas's sculptures in the adjacent room.



↑ Mat Collishaw's *Bullet Hole*, which Ian Jeffrey described as a "freeze-frame," thus giving the exhibition its title.

→ Damien Hirst's *Boxes*, which were exhibited in "Freeze," part I. For the final third part of the exhibition, Hirst exhibited early versions of his spot paintings.

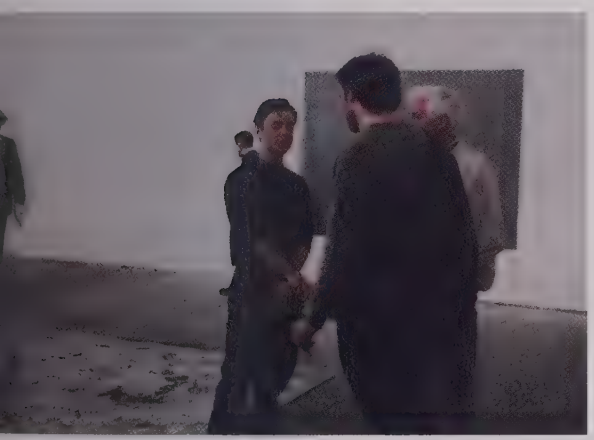
→→ Ian Davenport's *Untitled (Diptych)*.

→ Angela Bulloch's *White Light Piece* was exhibited in "Freeze," part 3. It consists of thirteen distorted plastic hemispheres with light bulbs.

↓ Opening night of "Freeze," part 2, with (left to right) Richard Patterson, Miles Glenn, and Matt Patterson, and works by Angus Fairhurst on the wall. The lead and bronze floor piece is Anya Gallaccio's *Waterloo*.

↓↓ "Freeze" opening party, showing (left to right), Ian Davenport, Damien Hirst, Angela Bulloch, Fiona Rae, Stephen Park, Anya Gallaccio, Sarah Lucas and Gary Hume.

↘ Opening party for "Freeze," part 2, with Richard Patterson (left) and Damien Hirst (right).



PLATONIC TROPICS

Ian Jeffrey

Freeze (exh. cat.), 1988

ADAMSON ... RAE: 1988. FREEZE, the title, comes from Mat Collishaw's light box, dedicated to a moment of impact, a preserved now, a freeze-frame. But, surely, if this is 1988, what are SADAT CARTER BEGIN doing in the lineup, along with COL. EDWIN EUGENE ALDRIN Jr, one of the three from the first space walk? That was when? Some time ago, certainly and Begin comes to life, too, as a ghostly television presence, along with Sadat and his saintly assassins. Simon Patterson calls back yesterday, not the yesterday of legend, as of Prohibition, for instance, or the Reichstag Fire, but a time not yet settled, which might be almost today. Once upon a time there were completely new starts, with yesterday a long way off, but under the new terms of reference the present comes less as itself than as the past redone, re-recorded, or maybe never even away.

UNDER THE OLD TERMS art and culture pressed ahead from one mentalité to another, or each new generation had its signature or particular phrasing. But if FREEZE is '88, what becomes of that idea of the collective imagination? Can it be responsible for, or implicated in, both Fiona Ray's brushed calligraphy and Damien Hirst's fungoid Constructivism creeping through the rafters. Even among artists who know each other, as is the case here, there seems little in common. What, for example does Steven Adamson's rubbery battery casing with bright attachments have to do with Abigail Lane's starched and buttoned tenting? Tents? Nearer to a typewriter covers I'd have thought; and whereas the detailing suggests an organic interior, whatever there is inside is more box than body. All at sea, I see. Not entirely, but what do these pieces consist of, or what do they mean, and how might they be described? They resist and the result is ... what? The typewriter reference means Underwood, and Duchamp, and Art ... And where was it first shown, and what did it mean when "attitudes become form" in the late '60s? But the buttons mean bosoms, or further into the metaphor, might be an outside signifying an inside, a meaning signaled.

ABOUT THAT BATTERY CASING: The text fell short of perfection there too, for everything on show might have been described exactly, in terms of brand names, functions, materials. It is true that the piece is larger than life, and that it looks artificial, but memory ought to be able to step in with an image of the original, as with its terms. In theory, at least; although what if there were no terms, and what if Adamson's references were to things defined by function rather than by speech? You mean that any amount of the everyday has its being free of words, or imprecisely touched by them? That might be to say that both Lane and Adamson raise questions about words and their adequacy, for their work suggests that it might be understood, or translated, or given meaning. How, then, does in exist, metaphysically, that rubber casing and that starched fabric? At the outset the pieces have presence, and then the presence dissolves in memory as words and definitions volunteer and fail. It is an art that would be kept in mind, an art that might more easily and intricately exist away from the original site.

WHAT ABOUT FIONA RAE and those studied, serviceable marks in colour on white? Can they just as readily exist apart from the original site? A pink right-angle rests on a black base, and supports a blue square and ring along with a heavy brushed purple and yellow crest: a vignette from several. Wait ... yes ... Fischli and Weiss, who did it in Switzerland with balanced carrots, forks, and table knives. The Swiss photographed the results, and came out with memories of precious moments: an idea of freeze, or the moment mediated. But these are different, for the balance depends on depth and weights of color, and of the representation of space contained. They might be read, that is; although how is a pink brush mark to be construed, or gray, or black? The subject examines the objects and reflects on equilibrium, mass and space, and on the values of colors. Reflects on? Perhaps it might be the other way around, for the stuff keeps its qualities, resists translation, and can only be apprehended on the spot in terms more physical than discursive.

SO ... WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE YOU apropos The Truth? Perhaps '88 works and makes in terms of difference, that it begins from an idea of polarity and of the complementary, and works toward totalization. One thing brings about its opposite. Dominic Denis, for example, paints an abstract on a grand scale. Is that accurate? The paintings materialize, as if from a giant consciousness moved from beyond by an impersonal essence of us in Nature. Dominic Denis is the local name of the manifestation. And Gary Hume? Nature takes a hand, for the gloss has sagged in drying. The painting thus acknowledge gravity, just as those overpainted motifs in low relief tell somewhat of time and process. The paint, though, came from the same sort of culture as the Adamson battery casing, and the overall shape of the piece looks both arbitrary and handy, the result of a decision taken without reference to a right order of things. But isn't that to demean both, as though one were in the hands of forces beyond his control and the other content merely to watch a surface subside under its own weight? Only in terms of genius, originality, and the fresh start. If, on the other hand, everything is there anyway, it might be seen in a different light, from a different standpoint, or it might be restressed or newly phrased, or the structure refurbished. Hume depends on Denis, and vice versa. Where would Hume's insights on arbitrary judgment, mere culture and the sheer force of gravity stand without Denis's confidence in the ensemble, the working together of subject and object?

HUME'S MUSHROOM GLOSS is a kind of New Sublime. "God, is that all: household paint and the force of gravity?" Angus Fairhurst would make the same sort of claims via limited means: a grid of four to one, and a loaded brush applied and re-applied until the mark fades. Times passes, that is, and judgment is exercised. The grid might be extended indefinitely, and the brush might do five strokes, sometimes more, before needing to be

recharged. He might be demonstrating heartbeat, breathing patterns or some life-cycles endlessly repeated, apart from any moment of truth, revelation or coalescence.

SUBLIME: FROM SOMETHING LIKE "under the threshold." The '80s would as soon give you the threshold, and rely on connotations to do the rest, as if its sign was sotto voce and irony its mode. A mountain range: no, but here is what might do in a knot of metal sheeting meant to answer to ambiance. Sarah Lucas did it, although she doesn't insist, for its subject is light acknowledged and the weather: a sun- or light-dial. What can you add of a self if the matter in hand involves such givens as light and the movement of the sun? Michael Landy's hung and clipped covers function in much the same way, as receptors of Nature, or light and contingent circumstances. One work with the kind of sheet metal available in any workshop, freely treated, and the other with plastic sheeting from the suburbs, with stuff, that is, which takes the light. Both pieces exist in an experienced, visible here and now, which is to say, apart from the discursive ambience generated by Adamson and Lane, and in moments poles apart from the sort of duration enacted by Fairhurt's operations.

IN FREEZE THE EXHIBITION is the thing, and you are (or I am) part of it. There was first of all that unavoidable matter of memory, and then Fiona Rae demonstrated subjectivity subsumed in the object. There was time as duration, and over and against it time as contingency, subject to available light. And then there is the space of the place. What exactly are those things by Richard Patterson ... floating shapes in script? They insist on scrutiny, decipherment even, whereas the Lucas range imposes movement, to catch the light thus or thus. I am, in front of one, that is, a reader, and in front of another a body perceiving. In front of that bulb and alternating bowl by Angela Bulloch I am, by contrast, uprooted or unrooted, a fascinated visionary, a floating optic detached from the body and its decisions. In FREEZE you might get the beauty of it pure, the essence of ART NOW, for elsewhere, in the arithmetic establishment, NOW comes qualified by second thoughts and infiltrated by history. What history there is on show here is here by invitation, and is just enough. Simon Patterson would give you just the name, and with it the pleasure of a memory stirred by a feather. Ian Davenport would give you ... what? Beauty ... in a dream landscape. Of course, Max Ernst, and those forests with Loplop. Surrealist forests were haunted by local fauna, which testified to personal capacity for fantasy. Davenport's landscapes are more utopian than local, ideal spaces, ideally spaced and colored, and free of Loplop and descendents, uninhabited and ready for occupation.

FREEZE INSISTS ON IMPERSONALITY as it insists on variety. Davenport's is an unauthored, even automatic beauty, untouched by the kind of brisk, universal spirit that works its way in the Denis abstracts. Platonic tropics. Damien Hirst, on the other hand, has Loplop at his fingertips, or would work stuff around in his own mode, into line with a style or skin to his own taste: the weight and juice in those painted boxes, for example. But what framework does he use? One which asserts control, one which acts as if dispassionately, from the modernist discovery of a universal order. He works within the terms recognised by Lala Meredith-Vulja [Lala Meredith-Vula] whose photography and film appears to concentrate on the self, but where the self becomes universal, a vehicle through which she focuses on gravity, equilibrium, verticality, on conditions of existence.

FREEZE IS 'EIGHTIES ART, not in the sense that it parades the most uncontested talents of its generation, but rather in the sense that it forms a quintessential 'eighties composite. Stephen Park would astonish you with a foam-stone oxymoron, in a piece that also elicits a verifying touch, and adds to the list of modes of apprehension on show. Anya Gallaccio, in contradiction to all the preceding talk of impersonality, volunteers inventions from the word of Loplop (in this case a lead square and a child's jumper cast in bronze, as if to give the personal a crushing weight and resonance). To have gone through the whole would have brought to light a world structured around those polarities elicited in this analysis. A synoptic diagram would be drawn up, and these pointers to totality secured. A collective imagination, that is, functioning along structuralist lines ... all under cover of an acute diversitarianism, more apparent than real. FREEZE is NOW, as the title implies.

THE FAST DOCKLAND TRACK TO SIMPLICITY

Sacha Craddock

The Guardian, 13 September 1988

Frowned on in the same way as self-published poetry, wistful attempts at exhibitions by friends and co-students have normally failed. "Freeze," though, is a success. Organized by Damien Hirst, one of the exhibitors, it brings together the work of seventeen [N.B. only sixteen artists were exhibited. Dominic Denis was not included in the final lineup] recent art school graduates in a derelict Dockland building in southeast London.

It succeeds perhaps because ruthless decisions have been made by one person, but maybe the very nature of art school products has changed in order to reflect the set-piece one-liner that succeeds in the commercial world.

At first sight, there is no self-doubt paraded in this lineup, no humor or innuendo either. This is sparse and serious stuff, its formality helps it along. It seems no longer necessary to chart each stage of decision making in today's art; mistake and confusion are no longer virtues, humble grind has been replaced by "I can do that too." Minimal art was only allowed at the end of the journey but here we have a speedily attained simplicity.

All of the artists share the same attitude to their material. By generally using one particular thing (metal, rubber, frothy foam) as idea, the stuff itself becomes more than half the art.

There are clues at times that point to inexperience, the tendency to fiddle and over-explain pesters every artist. Fiona Rae's large inverted lettering parades

across the white canvas in glorious acidic color. The idea is great, but she pushes and prods the paint uneasily in trying to make it hold there.

Steven Adamson's rubber wall piece opens from the wall—flower, flap or military hat, it doesn't need the colored worms to say anything more. Anya Gallaccio's carpet of melted lead and bronze loses its sharp edge and flatness in the flirtation of splattered swirls. Gary Hume's excellently painted surface is literally undermined by the geometric shapes that lie below.

Damien Hirst with his grey cardboard boxes that sit up high like a Cubist nest, and Richard Patterson, whose small pencil drawings are the equivalent of a child's circular pattern making, have a quite control of their materials that clearly comes out of a modernist tradition.

Art is always like a fast-moving children's roundabout. It is dangerous to leap on it at the wrong speed and from the wrong angle—it is important to run alongside for some time beforehand. Most of these exhibitors are moving at the right speed. Held in a beautiful building by the river, this show serves as an antidote to the tired thematic postmodern styles that have been clipped on to the fronts of recent Dockland development outside.

THE PLACEBO EFFECT: SOME ART IN BRITAIN

Liam Gillick

Arts Magazine, May 1991

An increasing recognition of the potential power of a united Europe has tempered the perceived isolation of Britain's island states. Despite these developments, attitudes are still affected by a certain degree of caution rooted in postcolonial hang-ups. You still hear people talking of Europe as a foreign place, something to be resisted and mistrusted, while there exists a lingering American cultural influence, one that is certainly bolstered by a shared language. The result of all this is a particular kind of schizophrenia. A good example of confusion between U.S.-style free market, and an Old-World caution was exposed during the award of a license for a new national commercial radio station, Britain's first. The House of Lords, an unelected legislative body of hereditary members, clergy, and burned-out politicians; spent some time trying to define rock music, having already decided that, whatever the nature of the new station, it would not play any. The final definition of what was allowable was "Music made before 1960 without a powerful beat." There you have it, a new commercial radio station not allowed to play any music unless it is more than thirty years old. Radio stations with strange restrictions, and unelected bodies in a democracy do give some idea of a national mood. It is no accident, therefore, that the most interesting art dealers in London are not British. Maureen Paley, who has just opened a new space on Dering Street, is from New York, Karsten Schubert is German, and Laure Genillard is Swiss. These three, among others, have all mounted interesting shows recently, but there are clearly not enough galleries to go around. In response to this problem, a particular type of exhibition has emerged—shows that have promised a degree of interest while having been organized, for the most part, by the participating artists. Yet, these shows have presented work that, goes beyond the familiar worthy meanderings of artist-originated exhibition. "Freeze," "East Country Yard," and "Milch" projects have all been widely reported in the European art press. Certain of the artists involved have been pinned down and attempts made to isolate blame for their emergence. As usual in Britain, such credit as is due is laid at the door of an art college. In this case, Goldsmiths' in South London. While it is true that certain groups have emerged from the place, it has not been the exclusive source of interesting new art. London once had a thriving dock area close to the centre of the city. From the late 1960s onward, this area stagnated, then slumped. Business was moved out closer to the estuary, and a greater use made of road distribution. After a period of swift and severe decline, most of the area lay in varying states of decay. More recently, in an effort to encourage some kind of revitalization, many building regulations were loosened up and companies moved into the area, commencing a familiar process of property speculation. As is usual in these cases, most liberal bodies, and concerned local organizations were against the changes, feeling that they acted against the best interests of the existing community. A degree of opposition to most of the speculative construction led to pressure and subsequent guilt on the part of certain developers. It was into this atmosphere, the lack of galleries and the availability of large buildings on the verge of conversion or demolition, that the "Freeze" project was introduced. Private companies are always conscious of their image and so, in the case of "Freeze," money and a space were made available to the organizers. The exhibitors in the show nearly all came from Goldsmith, (some were still in college at the time) the final show being characterized by a sense of purpose that allowed the work to communicate. Included in the exhibition were Fiona Rae and Ian Davenport, who have since exhibited at Waddington; Damien Hirst, the originator and curator of the show; and Michael Landy and Gary Hume, who have both exhibited widely, here and abroad. Angela Bulloch, who now shows at Interim Art in London and at Esther Schipper in Cologne, made a light construction for the entranceway to the building, introducing work that has been repeated and reworked subsequently. In this case, opaque plastic spheres containing lights were rigged onto the wall, and trailing wires, meshed and exposed, led to a control box that instigated a switching process. Her appropriation of the readily available spheres and their blunt presentation located both her works and the show. Most exhibited an awareness of certain precedents combined with an approach that could be traced to other artists here [in the UK], such as Tony Cragg, who has recently made work that is increasingly monumental and grand in scale. [...]

18

EXHIBITION

China/ Avant-Garde

LOCATION

National Art Gallery, Beijing

DATE

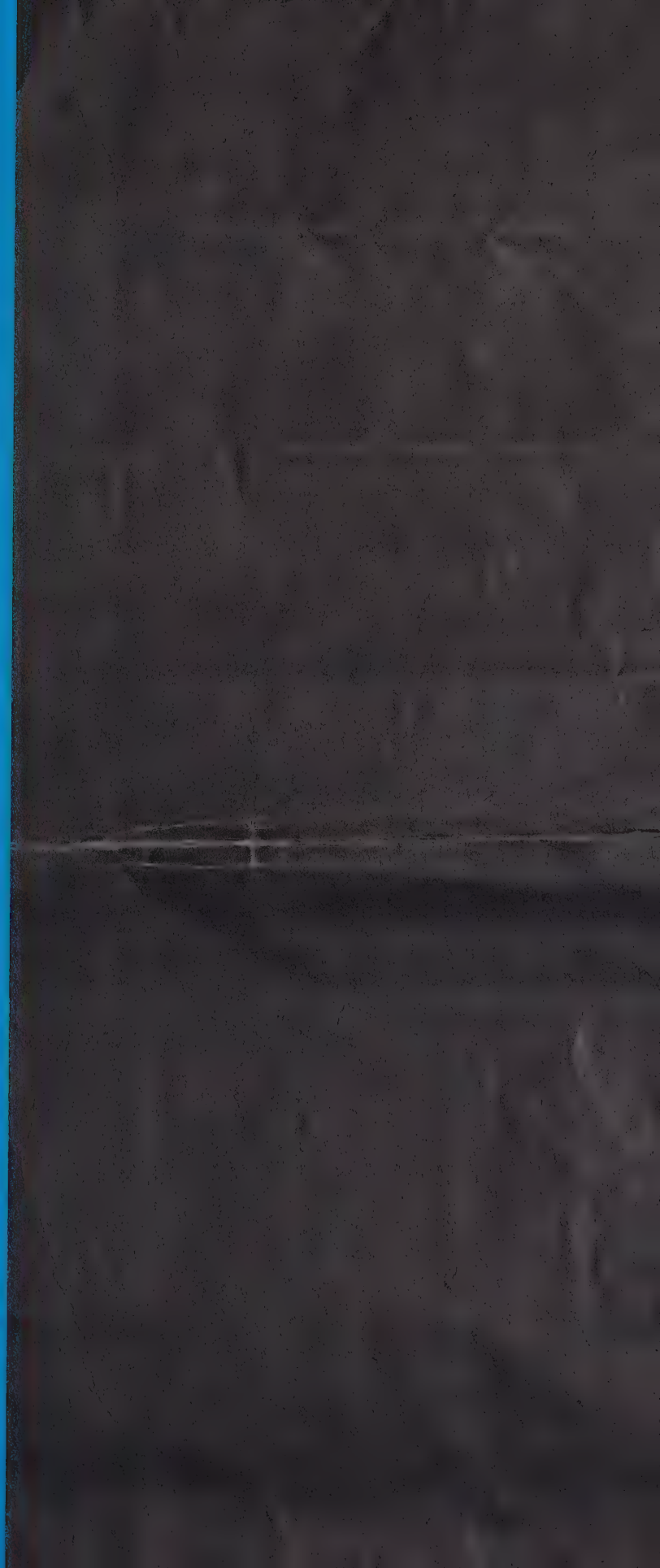
5 February, 9–12 February, 15–19 February 1989

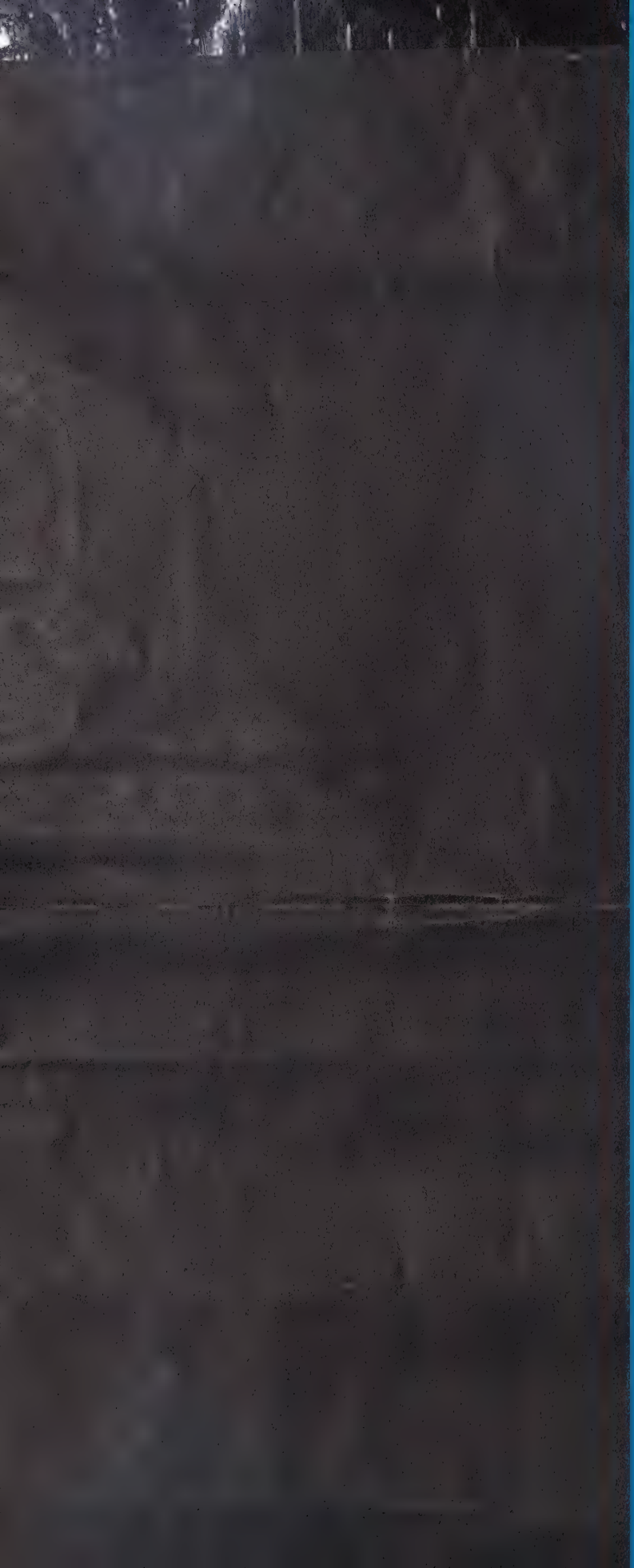
CURATORS

Fan Di'an, Fei Dawei, Gao Yang, Gao Minglu (head of the committee), Hou Hanru, Kong Chang'an, Li Xianting (curator), Lü Baohua, Liu Dong, Liu Min, Tang Qingnian, Wang Mingxian, Yang Libin, Zeng Chaoying, Zhang Yuejun, Zhang Zaying, Zhou Yan

ITINERARY

None





ARTISTS

Ai Shen, Bao Lede, Cao Dan, Cao Yong, Chai Peiyi, Chai Xiaogang, Chen Gang, Chen Yufei, Chen Wenji, Cheng Xiaoyu, Dai Guangyu, Ding Defu, Ding Fang, Ding Yi, Dong Chao, Dong Jianhua, Dong Jianming, Fan Shuru, Fang Lijun, Feng Guodong, Feng Lianghong, Feng Qiusu, Fu Kecheng, Gao Brothers, Gao Qiang, Gao Shen, Geng Jianyi, Gu Dexin, Gu Liming, Gu Wenda, Gu Xiong, Gu Zhenyan, Guan Zhaoye, Guang Yao, Guo Dalong, He Fang, Hou Hanru, Hu Jianping, Huang Weiguang, Huang Yali, Huang Yongping, Jian Jun, Jiang Hai, Jiao Jian, Jing Guo, Kong Xiang, Lan Zhenghui, Li Bangyao, Li Jin, Li Jixiang, Li Qiang, Li Qun, Li Shan, Li Weimin, Li Xinjian, Li Yafei, Liang Shaoji, Liang Yue, Lin Jiahua, Ling Huitao, Liu Anping, Liu Weidong, Liu Xiangdong, Liu Xiaodong, Liu Yan, Liu Yang, Liu Yi, Liu Yonggang, Liu Zhenggang, Luo Lifang, Luo Ying, Lu Huizhou, Lu Junhua, Lu Shengzhong, Lu Zuogeng, Ma Gang, Ma Lu, Mao Aihua, Mao Xuhui, Meng Changming, Meng Luding, Ni Jun, Ning Ning, Ou Xinwen, Pan Dehai, Pei Jing, Qi Kang, Qin Yining, Qu Yan, Ren Jian, Ren Xiaolin, Shao Pusheng, Shen Haopeng, Shen Qin, Shen Xiaotong, Shen Yuan, Sheng Jun, Sheng Qi, Shi Benming, Shu Qun, Song Gang, Song Haidong, Song Yonghong, Song Yongping, Su Liqun, Su Xinping, Sun Liang, Sun Ren, Wang Chuan, Wang Du, Wang Falin, Wang Guangyi, Wang Jiang, Wang Lu, Wang Luyan, Wang Xinping, Wang Yancheng, Wang Yi, Wang Yirong, Wang Youshen, Wang Yuan, Wang Ziwei, Wei Guangqing, Wei Ming, Wu Defu, Wu Pingren, Wu Shanzhuan, Wu Shaoxiang, Wu Xun, Wu Zhichun, Xia Xiaowan, Xiang Bingren, Xiao Lu, Xiao Feng, Xiao Xiaolan, Xin Haizhou, Xing Tonghe, Xu Bing, Xu Hong, Xu Jin, Xu Lei, Yan Binghui, Yan Lei, Yang Jiecang, Yang Jiechang, Yang Jun, Yang Maoyuan, Yang Shu, Yang Yingsheng, Yang Zhilin, Ye Fei, Ye Yongqing, Yin Qi, Yin Yanjun, You Han, Yu Jiyong, Yu Youhan, Yu Zhixue, Yuan Shun, Zhang Furong, Zhang Jie, Zhang Litao, Zhang Peili, Zhang Ping, Zhang Xiaogang, Zhang Yongjian, Zhang Yue, Zhang Yusheng, Zheng Jianing, Zhou Changjiang, Zhou Tiejun, Zhu Aiping, Zhu Jianxin, Zhu Mo, Zhu Xiaohe, Zhu Xikun, Zhu Yan, Zhu Zude, Zi Jian, Zuo Zhengyao

CATALOG

China/Avant-Garde. *Beijing: National Art Gallery and Guangxi People's Art Press, 1989.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: ca.181
Number of works: ca.297
Total attendance: unknown

A few months before the suppression of the pro-democracy movement at Tiananmen Square, "China/Avant-Garde" capped a decade of contemporary art activity in the People's Republic of China. The exhibition is often remembered as one of subversive content censored by the government, having been closed by the authorities on opening day after an artist shot her own work. But it was mounted with official permission in the most prestigious art venue in China, was reopened after three days and went on to hold all scheduled events. Active repression came later. In the mid-1980s, information about international contemporary art flooded into China, and new art journals proliferated under a more liberal cultural policy. About eighty artist groups formed throughout the country, organizing exhibitions and symposia in connection with what became known as the "'85 Art New Wave." The idea for a national exhibition to survey the new art arose at a 1986 conference in Guangdong province, and approval was obtained for a July 1987 show in the Beijing Agricultural Exhibition Hall. A government campaign against "bourgeois liberalization" prompted its cancelation, but a plan soon developed for an exhibition at the National Art Gallery of China.

The National Art Gallery required that exhibitions be sponsored by official state units, so chief organizer Gao Minglu and his colleagues obtained sponsorship from seven publishers and art organizations. The exhibition agreement stipulated that there would be no performance art or sexually explicit content, although performance documentation was allowed. The call for works yielded three thousand entries from across China, from which about three hundred pieces by almost two hundred artists were selected. After three months of intense preparation, the show was ready to open on February 5. It was the day before the Chinese New Year, a date chosen by authorities in hope of minimizing attendance. Because all works needed prior approval, a delegation of officials had reviewed the show. Only a few pieces were prohibited. Huge black banners featured the exhibition logo, the traffic sign for "No U-Turn." Since the museum would not allow them to be hung from the facade, they were laid in the courtyard forming a carpeted entryway. The exhibition filled six galleries on three floors with paintings, works on paper, photographs, installations, and videos. The first floor featured large installations chosen to give a radical first impression. Despite the prohibition against performance, a few artists presented such work during the morning opening. Wu Shanzuan sold fresh shrimp from a box on the first floor, a comment on art becoming a commercial enterprise. Zhang Nian tried to hatch eggs sitting on the second floor. Li Shan washed his feet in a basin containing images of United States President Reagan. Wang Deren threw thousands of condoms and coins around the show. But the performance for which the exhibition is known was Xiao Lu's shooting of her installation, *Dialogue*. A friend of Lu's was arrested immediately, and she surrendered to authorities later that afternoon.

After the shooting the exhibition was shuttered for three days, and the incident was widely reported in Chinese and international press. When the show reopened there were large crowds, with visitors from well beyond the art-world. Two days later the exhibition was closed for another two days due to a bomb threat. In the end, it was open for only eight days and two hours of the planned fifteen days. Following the show the National Gallery fined the sponsors for the many transgressions, and prohibited their sponsoring exhibitions at the museum for two years. And after the repression of the democracy movement, the exhibition was cited as an example of the evils of reform. While Lu's shooting was not politically motivated, it eerily prefigures the violence of Tiananmen four months later.

在中国改革开放的历史条件下，当代美术以它不断更新的视觉语言形成了前所未有的繁荣局面。在这种形势下，如何使中国当代艺术尽快走向世界，如何使我国社会主义美术更充分地满足社会文化发展的需要，亦即如何创造一个中国独特的现代艺术体系，已是当代美术家面临的重要历史使命。

近年来，中国现代艺术的创作活动已形成一个初具规模的可喜的局面。活跃在全国各地的美术家，特别是青年艺术家已成为探索中国现代艺术的主力，他们以各种方式推出了一大批作品，其中不乏富有时代气息和开拓精神的佳作。他们的创作活动日益为美术界和文化界关注，并形成了近年最有影响的艺术思潮。随着我国开放政策的不断实施，这种开拓艺术创新领域的趋势必将还方高涨。

对于当代美术中的新思潮和大量的探索性作品的评价、分析和总结，已多见于近年各种报刊和各种类型的艺术讨论会上，有关它的专著也将于年内相继问世。但是，迄今为止，中国目前的现代艺术活动及作品，还从未以整体面目面向社会，面向文化界和广大人民群众，从未有一个较大型的展览对其进行社会性的检阅和检验，而那些为中国现代艺术献身的众多的开拓者也苦于不能通过较大型的交流活动得到更深刻的启示和促动。现代美术是时代精神与社会文明的象征，具有悠久的艺术传统的社会主义中国已当成为重要的先进的现代艺术基地，这不但是美术家的使命，同时也是文化界乃至全社会的共同任务。鉴于此，我们文化界和美术界的几个单位联合发起举办“现代艺术展”。

在前不久全国美协召开的创作讨论会上，许多同志呼吁在1989年第七届全国美展之前，举办一些实验展。这样，一方面可以拓展全国美展的发动规模及范围，另一方面，可以从展览中发现新的作者和作品，从而有利于繁荣多元化艺术局面。“现代艺术展”即是这样一个具有积极意义的实验性展览。

“现代艺术展”的宗旨是促进社会主义精神文明，进行高层次的艺术交流，推出具有开拓性、时代性和有中国特色的高质量的现代艺术作品。展览以民间学术交流和民间自筹资金的方式举办。展览筹备处将聘请文化部门和中国美协的有关领导、学者和专家作顾问，以期得到上级和各界人士的支持和帮助。

展览拟定于1989年2月在中国美术馆举办。

我们衷心希望这个对中国当代美术事具有推动意义的展览得到社会各界的大力支持和帮助！

此致

敬礼！

中华全国美学学会
《文化：中国与世界》丛书编委会
《读书》杂志
中国美术报
现代艺术沙龙

同意美术杂志参加主办“现代艺术展”。
中国美术馆予以大力支持。

中国美协之证处
1988.10.22

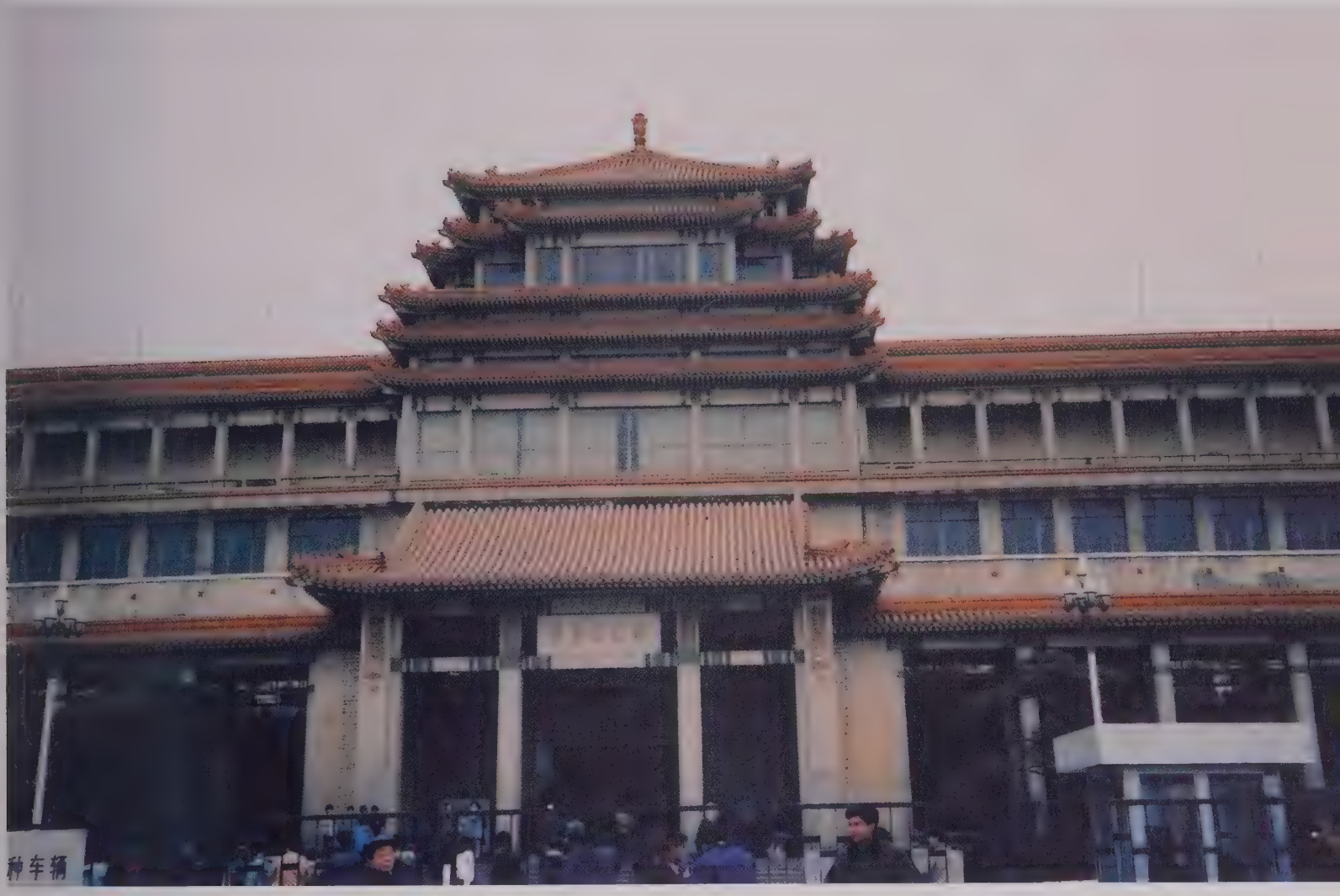
← The proposal for the “China/Avant-Garde” exhibition, with official signature and sponsors’ seals.

↓↓ Catalog cover for the exhibition, featuring the “No U-turn” logo designed by Yang Zhilin. The catalog features documentation of individual works, as well as a text by Gao Minglu in English.

→ View of the National Art Gallery of China, photographed on 17 February 1989, two days before the exhibition closed for the last time.

↘ Xiao Lu shooting a gun at her and Tang Song’s installation, *Dialogue*. Xiao fired a gun at the installation on the opening night of the exhibition as an unauthorized performance, prompting the authorities to close the exhibition temporarily.

↘↘ Xiao Lu and Tang Song standing in front of their installation, *Dialogue*.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北京工艺美术总公司
《中国市容景》
《文字自由说》杂志
CHINA/AVA GARDE
北京工艺美术总公司
《中国市容景》
《文字自由说》杂志
CHINA/AVAN

← ← Wang Yousheng's photograph of passersby and the poster for the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition designed by Yang Zhilin, outside the National Art Gallery of China.

↙ ↙ Outside the National Art Gallery of China, showing banners arranged on the ground. Museum officials would not allow the banners to be hung from the building.

← At a meeting during the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition. Standing up is Gao Minglu, one of the principal curators.

↓ Wang Yousheng's photograph of Geng Jianyi's *Second State*.

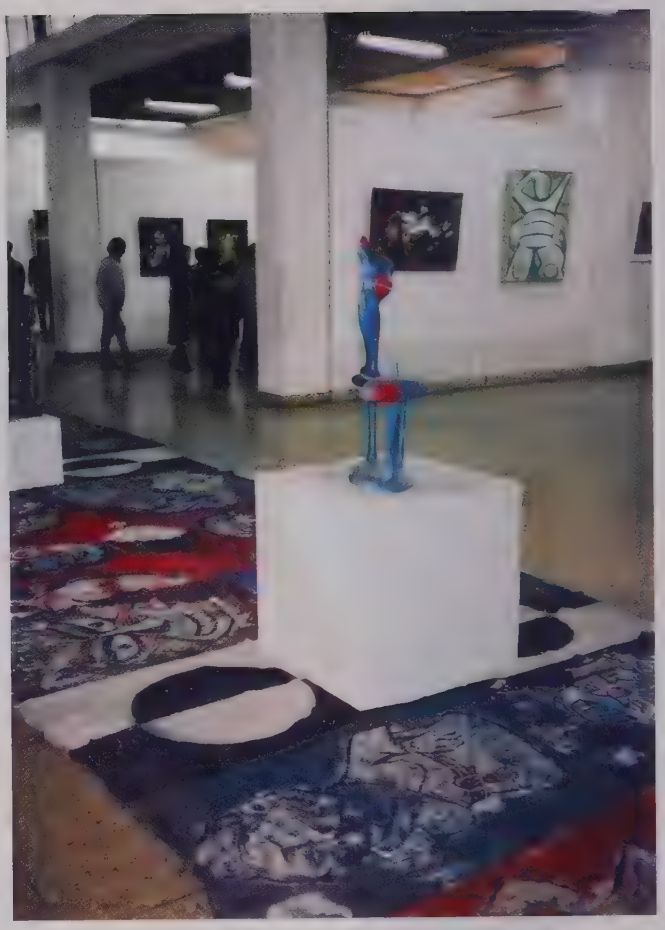
↑ Vistors in front of Gu Xiong's *Net-Fence*. The rip in the fence suggested the way that China had been opened up. Gu also created a performance before the work during the "China/ Avant-Garde" exhibition, in which he dressed in an outfit also decorated with a chain-fence motif.

← Wei Guangqing's *Suicide No. 1* draws a crowd. The work documents various mock-suicide performances by the artist and an assistant, and ropes with nooses hang from the ceiling. On the back wall is Gu Dexin's installation of colorful waste plastic.

→ View of Xu Jin's sculpture *Yin Yan*, with Wang Guangyi's *Mass-Produced Nativity*, and *Mao Zedong No. 1* on the wall behind.

↓ The sculpture in the center is *Yin Yang* by Xu Jin. On the walls are paintings by Wang Guangyi, including a work from the *Frozen North Pole* series on the far wall; on the right-hand wall is a piece from the *Post-Classical* series, the grid-painting *Mass-Produced Nativity*, and *Mao Zedong No. 1*. The latter was almost removed from the exhibition before the opening, after it was criticized by officials for putting Mao in a grid-like "jail."

↘ View of Xu Bing's installation, *A Book From The Sky*, which consists of scrolls of paper on which the artist has used traditional methods of wood-block printing to create fake written characters that are totally unintelligible.



↖ In the background is Goa Brothers' *Midnight Mass*, an installation made from inflatable rubber, rubber gloves, and condoms, which represents a hermaphroditic sexual organ.

↗ View of the exhibition, with Wu Shaoxiang's sculpture in the foreground.

→ View of the exhibition, with Liu Yan's *Altar* on the wall, second from left, and Chen Wenji's *Pink Paper* on the far right.

↑ Visitors looking at works by Zhang Peili, including several oil paintings from the *X?* series on the wall, and the floor-based sculpture *A Report on the Hepatitis Infection in 1988*.

→ Zhang Peili's *A Report on the Hepatitis Infection in 1988*.

CONTRACT

The China National Fine Arts Association
Culture: China and the World Series
Editorial Board
Reading Magazine
Modern Art Salon
22 September 1988

In this great era of opening up and reform, the ever-evolving visual language of contemporary art has entered an unprecedented period of prosperity. Within this new climate, Chinese contemporary artists are now faced with several important historical missions: to bring Chinese contemporary art to the world stage without delay, to make our nation's Socialist art more fully satisfy the development needs of our society and culture, and to create a distinctly Chinese modern art system.

Over the past few years, in the field of Chinese art, a new positive situation has begun to take shape. Artists active all over the country, especially young artists, have become a major force in artistic exploration, using various modes of practice to produce a great quantity of work full of the fresh vision and spirit of a new generation, among which there is also no lack of fine work. Their creative activities have increasingly been attracting the attention of both the art world and cultural sector, and collectively are fast becoming regarded as the most influential art movement of modern China. Following the ongoing implementation of reform in our nation, this groundbreaking new force in the creative field is set to continue its surge into the future.

Regarding the criticism, analysis, and evaluation surrounding this new generation of artists and their plethora of exploratory works, recent years have seen the blossoming of several new journals and magazines. From various conferences and seminars, theses and monographs on related topics have also emerged. But, until now, Chinese modern art is yet to present itself to the whole of society, to face both the cultural sector and the vast population. Never before has there been a comparatively large exhibition to set in motion an inspection and review of contemporary art open to many levels of society; indeed, the pioneering individuals who dedicate themselves to this cause have suffered by not being able to obtain a deeper level of exposure and promotion through large-scale discursive events. Modern art is the spirit of a generation, an emblem of civil society; with a long-established Socialist tradition, China ought to be known as an important base for the advancement of modern art. This is not solely the task of artists, but also of those from the wider cultural sector, and the collective responsibility of all society. It is in view of this that we, as organizations that hold positions in both the art world and cultural sector, have came together to organize the "China/Avant-Garde Exhibition."

Not long ago, at a creative symposium organized by the China Artists Association, several comrades requested that before the "7th National Art Exhibition," due to take place in 1989, a few more experimental exhibitions be held. They argued that these exhibitions would expand the scope and range of the National Art Exhibition, and could be used to discover new artists and works, thereby bringing greater diversity and plurality to the arts. The "China/Avant-Garde Exhibition" is just one of those experimentally minded and highly significant exhibitions.

The objectives of the "China/Avant-Garde Exhibition" include the promotion of the spirit and culture of Socialism, the elevation of art discourse in China to a higher level, and the promotion of innovative, contemporaneous, and distinctly Chinese modern art of high quality. It has been organized by academic exchanges among the people involved, and has been self-funded. In order to gain the support and assistance of both higher authorities and of people from assorted disciplines, the preparatory committee engaged in consultation with directors, scholars, and specialists connected to both the Ministry of Culture and the China Artists Association.

The exhibition is scheduled to open in February 1989 at the National Art Gallery. We wholeheartedly hope that this exhibition, so important to the advancement of Chinese contemporary art, receives the vigorous support of people from all parts of society.

PREFACE

Gao Minglu
China/Avant-Garde (exh. cat.), 1989

There has been a half-century-long development of modern art (Avant-Garde) in China since the 1920s and 1930s. The process has also been full of frustration. Any tendency or movement had not been able to take shape until the past few years, since 1985 to be precise. We consider this exhibition a summary and a review of the active development of modern art as a movement in this country.

It is an established fact that modern art, which originated in the West, has already become pervasive in every corner of the world. China, with an ancient cultural heritage, will build herself up into an important base of modern art creation. The crystallization of human culture has certainly condensed the common experience of human beings, the evolution of civilization, and, above all, an identical ideal to which all the people from various cultural areas in the contemporary world have been pursuing. The fact of constructing a building of modern civilization upon the solid foundation of traditional culture has demonstrated the courage and ambition of Chinese people facing and taking up challenges of all kinds.

Modern ideas, as the spirit of contemporary art, reflect people's self-conscious experience of themselves existing in their country, the world, and the spiritual space of their life, and furthermore, their new interpretations of these subjects. A logical revolution has carved out a tendency in modern art that extends outward to a wider cultural field. On the one hand, by means of combining various materials and media, modern art touches and moves those personal experiences of social culture and of human history in the human consciousness, and, reworked by association, forms a certain cultural pattern. On the other hand, it awakens the unconsciousness of human beings, probes the origins of human life, and contemplates the fact of being human by creating compositions formed of abstract or represented images. As a result, an artwork

is such a world—or an individual life, or a history of human life, or a process of social-cultural movement.

The exploitation of space and thought, while forging ahead and bringing about changes day after day, is leading modern art into a magnificent and somewhat grotesque realm. Is the world changing human perception? Or, on the contrary, is our perception twisting the world? There is no need to get entangled in such endless debates about the philosophy of art. We have already a natural presentation of all that happened in our inner world: those we have seen, thought about, dreamed of, and even not been able to see [...] innumerable wonderlands. This is the art world of modern human beings as well as their spiritual world. In this world, there exists a mixture of conflicts between the beautiful and the ugly, the new and the old, the true and the false, the good and the evil, and also existing complicated values. It has completed a process of spiritual sublimation and cultural immersing through the mutual contemplation and common creation among artists, their words, and spectators, after saying good-bye to art meant to please human sense organs alone or instruct people with dogmas. In our opinion, we can reach the conclusion that modern art is an art that belongs to the people.

While China is opening its door to the world, it is not as difficult for modern art here to make progress as in the past, but instead it offers a splendid sight. However, it is undeniable that it is still struggling to progress further more smoothly. The way toward perfection, for everyone in this world, always begins with the first step, and then another step is reached toward the upper stage. Therefore, such a "first step" is exactly the purpose, direction, and significance of our exhibition.

In the meantime, while we celebrate the Chinese New Year, the traditional spring festival, and the grand meeting of the Chinese modern art world, let's raise up the glasses in our hands and wish success on this exhibition. We believe that there will be a prosperous future for the needs of Chinese modern art. In conclusion, I would like to remind you that our exhibition is dedicated to the memory of the generations of artists who themselves contributed to the creation of modern art in China.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHINA/ AVANT-GARDE EXHIBITION

Zhou Yan

Beijing Youth Daily, 10 February 1989

Around the year 1985, the numerous young artists active all over China began to group together, forming nearly one hundred different avant-garde art collectives. Producing a large quantity of highly exploratory work, critics and theorists began to label this new phenomenon the "85 New Wave." In August 1986, in Zhuhai, Guangdong, the "Large-Scale Slide Exhibition of New Wave Art," featuring nearly one thousand different slides of artworks, was held as part of a conference designed to initiate exchange and qualitative analysis, and a comprehensive review of the contemporary art scene. The physical limitations of this conference led a few of its representatives to propose another much larger, national exhibition of new original works. After a period of preparation, a new exhibition, showcasing young artists from all over the country, was to open at the China Agricultural Museum in July 1987. However, as it approached, certain causes led the project into difficulty, and the exhibition wwas canceled.

At this point, the New Wave art scene entered a new, comparatively quiet phase. Artists and theorists withdrew and began to carry out a cool-headed reflection and evaluation of the entire situation, striving to take the modern art that had been blossoming all over China to a more complex and developed level. Meanwhile, artists continued to probe and explore creativity, and a group of young scholars collated a vast amount of original materials for a book to be titled *A History of Chinese Contemporary Art: 1985–1986*. Gao Minglu, Zhou Yan, and six others composed fifty thousand characters of text to accompany nearly three hundred resulting in a comprehensive, objective, and calm analysis of that brief but vibrant period. Following the publication of this book, a small group of theorists and artists returned to the idea proposed at the 1986 conference in Zhuhai. This time they were resolutely determined to succeed in holding the first major exhibition of modern art in China, and after a huge amount of work by everyone involved, 5 February 1989 was the date finally set for the exhibition opening. It was to be held at the National Art Gallery in Beijing and bear the title "China/Avant-Garde Exhibition."

In order to ensure its success, the young group contacted a number of influential Chinese cultural organizations and enterprises, inviting them to participate in this event sure to become so momentous to the Chinese art world. The organizations contacted included the editorial boards of *Culture: China and the World*, *Fine Arts* magazine, and *China Fine Arts* newspaper, and eight others. As a form of theoretical preparation for the exhibition, the Research Institute of Fine Arts of the Chinese National Academy of Arts and the Hefei Painting and Calligraphy Institute convened the 88' Symposium on the Creation of Modern Art, which took place in late November 1988 in Tunxi District, Anwei. Over one hundred different people participated, including many up-and-coming and talented artists, as well as the exhibition's core group of writers and theorists.

In November 1988 the "China/Avant-Garde" preparatory committee was established in Beijing. Seventeen people were chosen, and Gao Minglu was appointed its leader. The committee invited Li Zehou, Liu Kaiqu, and Wu Zuoren and twelve others to act as consultants and guide the direction of the exhibition. The preparatory process gained the enthusiastic support of the China Artists Association, the National Art Gallery, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, as well as other important institutions. Extensive discussion and research produced the following objectives: to be the first comprehensive presentation of Chinese art possessing modern concepts and spirit to all society, both in mainland China and abroad; to focus

reflection on the major new wave of creativity and current state of exploration and practices of art that the Chinese art world has followed, debated, and critiqued in recent years; to discuss the value and significance of modern art to cultural development within contemporary Chinese society; to act as an event for the advanced discussion of modern art, and to promote the development of various areas of Chinese art.

After the first committee bulletin released to the domestic art world in November 1988, the preparatory committee received by post and in person nearly three thousand slides, photographs, project proposals, and even original works from artists of various regions of China, forcing the preparatory committee to adopt a highly selective admission process. Of all the entries, 250 different pieces were chosen for exhibition. The six exhibition halls of the National Art Gallery featured work in various media, including sculpture, painting, installation, and performance works documented in photographic form. To provide further context and information related to the exhibition, film screenings and slide shows were held. In order to elevate Chinese modern and contemporary art to a higher level theoretically and critically, and also to forge a more effective connection between this new phenomenon and both academia and the public, the preparatory committee organized a series of events to take place during the exhibition, including the China/Avant-Garde Symposium and other academic lectures concerning art criticism.

The "China/Avant-Garde Exhibition" warmly welcomes lovers and followers of Chinese contemporary culture from the mainland or abroad to attend this grand pageant of the Chinese Art World, during this exciting holiday period!

CONFESSIONS OF A "CHINA/AVANT-GARDE" CURATOR

Li Xianting

Meishu shilun (Art History and Theory), no. 3, 1989

[...] In terms of the design and arrangement of the exhibition hall, I emphasized a sense of "intensity." I had asked Zhang Zhilin from Nanjing to design a symbol for the exhibition, and when he told me that he wanted to appropriate the "No U-Turn" traffic sign, I was thrilled. This symbol for the exhibition exceeded mere design by introducing a Pop Art color-scheme with some unforeseen implications. The result was very striking. As Wang Jiong, Fan Weimin, and Cao Biao of the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts used black as the central color-scheme, the red and white of the symbol took on an even stronger and more solemn meaning. Because of interference from the National Art Gallery, however, the original design had to be revised considerably.

Since we were pressed for time, we could only rely on slides and photographs during the initial selection process. As a result, a considerable portion of the original works that were sent to the exhibition turned out to be unsatisfactory. Moreover, we underestimated the size of the exhibition hall and found that there was no way to select works from among such a limited number. So, we placed our emphasis on building the atmosphere of the exhibition. However, we still managed to emphasize the most representative artists and works since 1985. It was inevitable that the newly emerging artists and their works would be uneven in artistic quality. To a certain extent, this also reflects a phenomenon that is common to New Wave itself, as well as to artistic trends in general.

In addition to emphasizing the provocative nature of the works, I had planned to write explanatory texts to accompany the key artists and works to better communicate with the public. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and other circumstances, I was unable to realize this idea. China's New Wave art all along has marched forward amid an extremely difficult environment, enduring the shackles of both spiritual and material conditions. When art authorities and lofty scholars accuse New Wave art of being crude, have they ever considered the environment in which these works were produced?

And have they considered the lack of financial resources and the time constraints under which "China/Avant-Garde" had to be completed? Yet perhaps it is precisely due to these conditions that New Wave art and the "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition maintained a certain kind of dynamic energy. This is the fundamental standard upon which I will not waver.

On the day of the opening, I had originally planned to use balloons to float the black fabric banner featuring the exhibition symbol and slogan. But, for unforeseen reasons, it was laid out in the plaza instead. Looking at it now, I think the effect worked out well in the end. When laying out the black cloth, the atmosphere in the plaza was intense, and my mind was full of thoughts about the impact that this exhibition would have on society. The intensity made for an exciting, explosive atmosphere.

The two unexpected gunshots added to the intensity. Since Tang [Song] and Xiao [Lu] had not informed me before their performance, they managed to conceal their plans; and it was precisely the work's secrecy that engendered its sudden shock.

At that time, I was unaware of the circumstances surrounding the gunfire, but it matched my psychological state. When the gunfire occurred, I became immediately conscious of the sensitive social psychology that these gunshots embodied. After having been constrained for so long, a new mentality yearned to be set free (see my article "Two Gunshots: The Curtain Call of New Wave Art" ["*Liang sheng qiang xiang: Xinchao yishu de xiemuli*"] in Fine Arts in China, 13 March 1989 [no. 11]). After the gunshots rang out, members of the organizing committee became extremely anxious and convened a meeting of all the participating artists in Beijing. The meeting occurred on the second day of the exhibition's closing, which was the day of the Chinese New

Year. In the wake of the gunfire, there were vast differences between my frame of mind and that of the other members of the organizing committee. As a result, I didn't attend this meeting. It was said that in this conference, key committee members rudely admonished the artists. Actually, throughout the entire exhibition, I couldn't bear to watch the commanding attitude that a few critics on the committee held over the artists. They treated the exhibition as if it were a gift to be graciously bestowed on the artists, as if they were presenting them with the opportunity to enter "history." Thus, a few of these critics were flustered and frustrated at the mischievous performances carried out during the exhibition; they were simply too focused on the exhibition as a historical activity. In fact, the exhibitions with true historical significance had already occurred during the early days of the New Wave, when the original group activities took place. By the time they were re-exhibited as part of this retrospective, that kind of historical originality was already past. All that remained was an opportunity to influence society. After the exhibition was closed, negotiations continued among the Public Security Bureau, the museum, and the organizing committee. One member of the Public Security Bureau suggested shutting down the entire exhibition. In response, I impulsively penned and displayed the notice, "The China/Avant-Garde Exhibition Is Suspended for [Unspecified] Reasons" ("*Zhongguo yishu zhan yingu zanting*"). I wrote this on the belief that suspension would bring an even more forceful meaning to the exhibition. Because of China's culture of "reverse psychology," shutting down the exhibition would serve to provoke society farther, and hasten their ability to fearlessly face fear.

Although the exhibition was suspended twice, it was still reopened and carried out as planned with the support from various sectors. Interestingly, when people attended the exhibition after the reopening, they became even more attentive to the details, increasing the stark contrast between the tremendous rumors surrounding the show and the traditional elements in many paintings. This created some disappointment on the part of the general public. In all fairness, though, the fact that the exhibition was able to represent aspects of the past three or four years of New Wave art and exhibit work by some of the important artists was already a considerable achievement. It is incomprehensible how some critics compare "China/Avant-Garde" to the retrospective "The Stars: Ten Years" (in Hong Kong and Taiwan) and belittle our exhibition. "The Stars: Ten Years" was completely lacking in any thought, and, to borrow a phrase that Wang Keping wrote to me, "Your exhibition thwarted the Stars' return to their homeland." No matter how we evaluate "China/Avant-Garde," it was a milestone for Chinese art, one that advanced new art to another level and endured great hardship to be a pioneer of its kind.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF "CHINA/AVANT-GARDE" (1989)

Hang Jian and Cao Xiao'ou
Meishu (Art), 256, no. 9, 1989

5 FEBRUARY 1989

For many people today marks a long-awaited day.

Although 5 February is Chinese New Year's Eve, quite a few visitors attended. Famous figures in the literary field arrived, such as Tang Dacheng, Feng Yidai, Yuan Kejia, Feng Jieai, and Zhang Kangkang. Along with the people from the art world, they brought a genuine, spirited interest to the whole scene.

Enormous black flags were displayed throughout the central exhibition hall. On the flags was an emblem similar to a "No U-Turn" sign, which was particularly eye-catching as it contrasted starkly with the white background. The colors of the design—black, red, and white—appeared solemn and stirring, although they are also representative colors from Chinese tradition.

I spent some time navigating my way around the Gao Brothers' *Inflatable Installation* (*Chongqi diaosu*), Xiao Lu's [and Tang Song's] *Dialogue* (*Duihua*), and Li Weimin's *House* series (Fangwu), and then stopped to chat with some friends. While we were talking, we suddenly heard two loud bangs. Some people assumed that the *Inflatable Installation* had exploded.

We quickly learned that Xiao Lu, a young female artist from Shanghai, and her boyfriend Tang Song, had opened fire and taken two shots—with a real gun—at their own work Dialogue. Both bullets struck their installation, a mirror flanked by two phone booths.

The police from the Beijing Public Security Bureau arrived. The atmosphere in the exhibition halls turned instantly from playful fun to nervous tension. According to the regulations prescribed by the exhibition's organizing committee, Conceptual art and performance art are prohibited on the exhibition site. As a result, not long after the opening ceremony, performance pieces by Wu Shanzhuan, Wang Deren, and other artists were immediately brought to a halt.

The exhibition was temporarily suspended. The participating artists and viewers swarmed around the area in front of the museum. By then, the museum's iron gates had already been shut. While some people on the street, busy with Chinese New Year festivities, hurriedly stopped and then left, crowds of onlookers continually formed outside of the iron gates.

In the conference room next to the central exhibition hall, the exhibition's organizing committee and officials from the Public Security Bureau urgently discussed the situation. Foreign news reporters and journalists were extremely eager and continually interviewed people in the museum plaza. Chinese reporters were sensitive to the situation as well. The assembled crowds were like a floating vessel drifting towards where news was breaking.

Around 2 p.m., when a car full of armed riot police rushed to the spot, people were in an uproar. Journalists' camera shutters continually clicked away and flashes went off, and the police car quickly left the scene. When a few independent vendors brought fruit, soda, and bread to the artists, their supportive gestures were greeted by them with cheers.

The exhibition flag covering the ground in the plaza had to be removed. The artists seemed to have a premonition of things to come, as one after another they took photos in front of the flag as souvenirs.

For the sake of "security," the museum was shut down for three days. By 5 p.m., the artists began to scatter. That night, when an artist called his wife—an overseas student in Hamburg, Germany—she immediately asked "Did something happen over there?"

10 FEBRUARY, EXHIBITION REOPENS

The "gunshot incident" led to sensational reactions and caused the second opening to draw even greater crowds. The reopened "China/Avant-Garde" exhibition attracted not only cultural elites, but also common people. The organizing committee members originally planned on a retrospective of modern art that would be academic in nature. However, the state of the exhibition changed after the two gunshots, and the new situation reached far beyond the committee's expectations.

The "media" aspect [of the gunshot incident] drew wide public attention.

Enthusiastic viewers spontaneously debated about what happened at the exhibition even before leaving the museum. Public perceptions were mixed. The news media swung into action immediately; some dispatched reporters [to cover a contemporary art exhibition] for the first time, while others presented continuous coverage of the event. As artists faced formidable social value judgments and opportunities provided by the media, they found themselves under assault and on trial.

At the opening of the exhibition, Wu Shanzhuan carried out a shrimp-selling activity. He stated: "Since the museum has become a court for judging artwork, I want to create a black market for art, even though it will only last a minute." Selling out of a certain amount of shrimp, he took pleasure in claiming "I approached shrimp-selling at the museum with good intentions. Told an art critic, 'Before, you made me famous with your review of my work. Today, you can buy my shrimp and take them home with you!'"

Wang Deren, the artist who once did a performance above the snowline of Mount Everest, scattered condoms and coins at the opening. His actions drew protests from the viewers and garnered resentment from Huang Yong Ping, the founder of the Xiamen Dada art group. Huang Yong Ping, sharing the same exhibition space with Wang Deren, complained that because his work was covered with too many condoms, it was rendered almost unrecognizable. In response, Wang Deren criticized: "Huang Yong Ping is a false Dadaist!"

Due to his unacceptable performance art activity, the organizing committee requested that Wang Deren turn in a report to explain his actions. However, what he wrote down was: "The fact that the ubiquitous coins-for-condoms exchange was replaced by free give-aways showed a playful mistreatment of the artistic concept." I thought that "playful mistreatment" was a type of "playful mocker," but I was told that was incorrect.

Some of the viewers said "China is in urgent need of modern art!" Others stated that they experienced "an unspeakable feeling of disgust and anxiety." Some wrote "Save art!" in the visitors' book. Some shouted, "We salute you!" And some teased that "The lousy paintings in this exhibition are not as good as my son's scribbles."

And there were others looking for nude portraits or expecting something more to follow the gunshots, etc. [...]

17 FEBRUARY

On 15 and 16 February the exhibition was shut down for three days. It was said that the National Art Gallery, the Beijing Daily (Beijing ribao), and the Beijing Public Security Bureau received the same anonymous letter made from cutout letters from newspapers stating that "'China/Avant-Garde' must be immediately shut down; otherwise we will detonate the three bombs that we've installed in the museum." After inspection, it turned out to be a false alarm. Today again is the first day following the reopening of the exhibition. A long line extended from the bag check at the entrance of the museum, and more security was added to guard the gate. I remember that someone from the organizing committee sighed with emotion: "'China/Avant-Garde' has truly been slow to emerge!"

The first troublemaker, who played the lead role in the gunshot event, Xiao Lu, had already departed and returned to the south with her friend Tang Song. They left a note as a public announcement: "As the people involved in the handgun incident at the opening of 'China/Avant-Garde,' we believe this to be a purely artistic event. We believe that art naturally carries with it the artists' different understandings of society. But, as artists, we are not interested in politics. Rather, what interests us is the artistic and social value of art itself, as well as the way in which we can use a suitable form to create and to extend and deepen our understanding of art."

We perhaps need to wait until the distant future before evaluating Xiao Lu and Tang Song's actions. But the social reality in China has made them the focus of the media. I don't know whether or not this coincides with their original intentions.

Throughout the exhibition, we have sensed the flavor of the era and a variety of emotions. Here is a brief passage from Fan Oi'an, whose pertinent words bring out a great sense of mission: "In a nation plagued by so much hardship, and engulfed by dizzying competition over material comforts, we still have a group of artists who persistently devote themselves to finding a spiritual dwelling place. This exhibition was a critical reminder to society. Even if it is passé to talk about a so-called sense of mission."

19

EXHIBITION

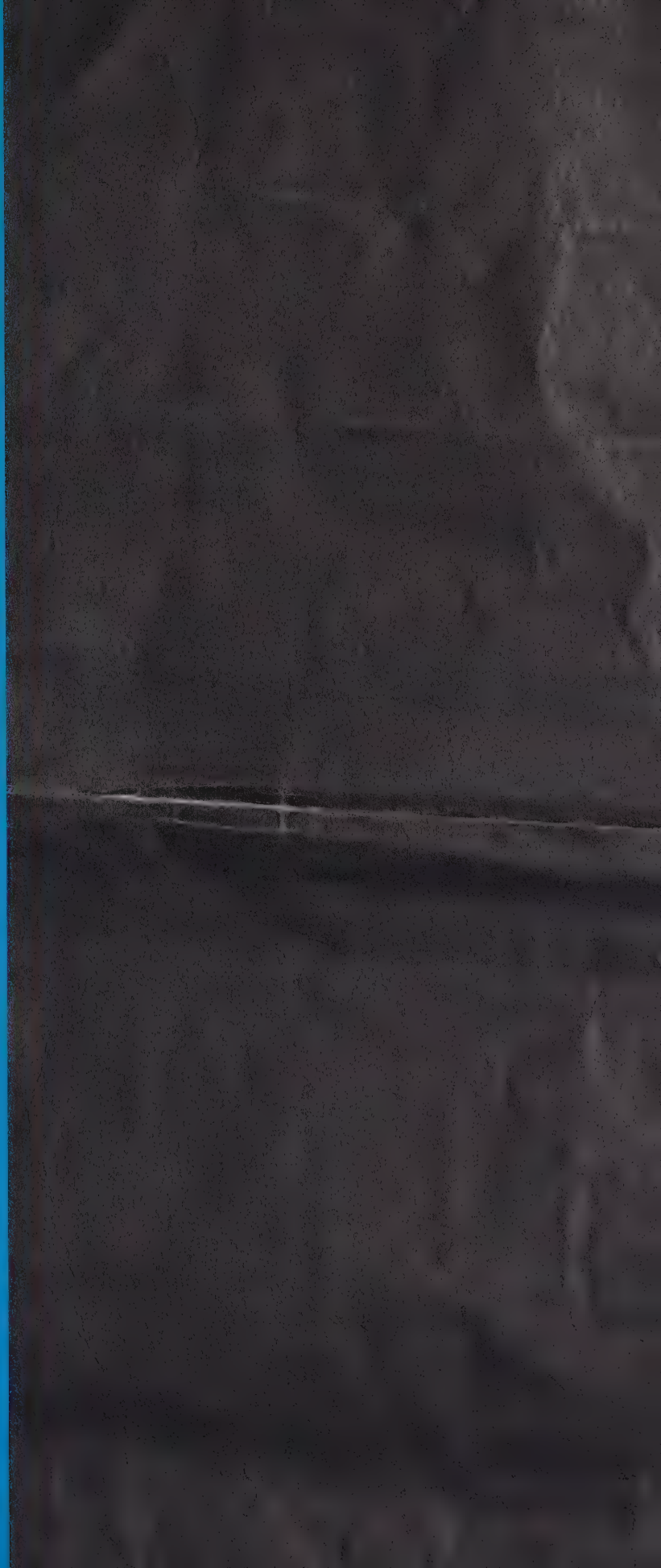
Magiciens de la Terre

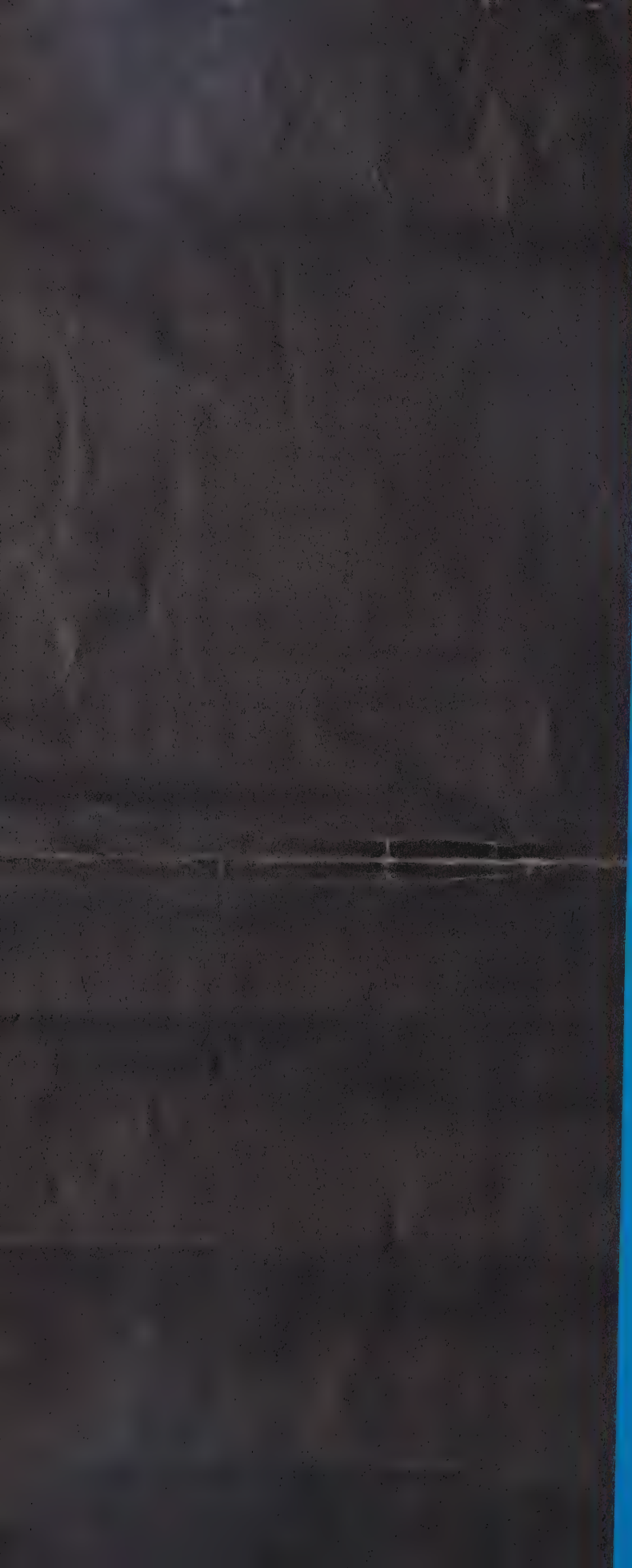
LOCATION

Centre Georges Pompidou & Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris

DATE

18 May–14 August 1989





CURATOR

Jean-Hubert Martin

ITINERARY

None

ARTISTS

Marina Abramović, Dennis Adams, Sunday Jack Akpan, Jean-Michel Alberola, Dossou Amidou, Giovanni Anselmo, Rasheed Araeen, Nuche Kaji Bajracharya, John Baldessari, José Bédia, Joe Ben Jr., Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Gabriel Bien-Aimé, Alighiero e Boetti, Christian Boltanski, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Erik Boulatov, Louise Bourgeois, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, James Lee Byars, Seni Camara, Yang Jie Chang, Mike Chukwukelu, Francesco Clemente, Marc Couturier, Tony Cragg, Enzo Cucchi, Cleitus Dambi/Nick Dumbrang/Ruedi Wem, Neil Dawson, Bowa Devi, Maestre Didi, Braco Dimitrijević, Efiaimbelo, Zush Evru, Julio Galan, Moshe Gershuni, Enrique Gomez, Gu Dexing, Hans Haacke, Rebecca Horn, Shirazeh Houshiary, Huang Yongping, Alfredo Jaar, Nera Jambruk, Ilya Kabakov, Tatsuo Kawaguchi, On Kawara, Anselm Kiefer, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Per Kirkeby, John Knight, Agbagli Kossi, Barbara Kruger, Paulosee Kuniliusee, Kane Kwei and Paa Joe, Boujemaâ Lakhdar, Georges Liautaud, Felipe Linares, Richard Long, Esther Mahlangu, Karel Malich, John Mawurndjul, Cildo Meireles, Mario Merz, Miralda, Tatsuo Miyajima, Norval Morrisseau, Juan Muñoz, Henry Munyaradzi, Claes Oldenburg/Coosje van Bruggen, Nam June Paik, Wesner Philidor, Sigmar Polke, Ronaldo Pereira Rego, Chéri Samba, Sarkis, Twins Seven Seven, Raja Babu Sharma, Jangarh Singh Shyam, Nancy Spero, Daniel Spoerri, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Yousuf Thannoon, Lobsang Thinle/Lobsang Palden/Bhorda Sherpa, Cyprien Tokoudagba, Ulay, Ken Unsworth, Chief Mark Unya/Nathan Emedem, Patrick Vilaire, Acharya Vyakul, Jeff Wall, Lawrence Weiner, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Jimmy Wululu, Jack Wunuwun, Yuendumu community.

CATALOG

Magiciens de la Terre. *Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1989.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 100
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

"Magiciens de la Terre" ("The Magicians of the Earth") sought to present on an even footing fifty artists from the centers of the art world with an equal number of artists from outside Europe and North America. An ideologically charged project, the exhibition was attacked from the left for retaining the perspective of a dominant West, and from the right for undermining the notion of universal aesthetic quality. But the show was applauded for addressing the status of art in a postcolonial and increasingly globalized world. As an exhibition that highlighted the issue of equality in the aesthetic arena, it was one with its historical moment: the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the year of the Tiananmen Square protests, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the imminent end of apartheid in South Africa.

The curator was Jean-Hubert Martin, who had the idea for the show some years earlier as a version of the Paris Biennial. Having become Director of the National Museum of Modern Art at the Centre Georges Pompidou, he developed the project for the fifth floor of his museum and the Grand Hall of the Parc de la Villette, a huge iron and glass structure far from central Paris. At both sites, works were displayed in rooms dedicated to individual artists, although the central space at La Villette was one of juxtaposition amidst a procession of installations.

Martin assembled a team of curators, anthropologists, and regional specialists. Team members traveled throughout the world, with information from local experts directing them to certain artists. This kind of exploratory research was not needed in selecting the Europeans and Americans, who for the most part were well known. But curators did send some of them to non-Western locations, for example Lawrence Weiner was dispatched to Papua New Guinea. Not only was the project designed to exhibit works together from center and periphery, but it was meant to facilitate communication among artists from different cultures. Most of this interaction, however, occurred in Paris, where quite a few works were made on-site.

Many non-Western pieces were related to ritual practice—a ground painting by members of the Yuendumu aboriginal community in Australia, a sand mandala by Nepalese monks, walls painted by Esther Mahlangu of South Africa. Others exemplified vernacular arts—carved caskets in automobile form by Kane Kwei from Ghana, papier-maché animals by members of the Lenares family from Mexico. But there were also non-Western works that felt quite at home within the cosmopolitan art world, as was the elegant bamboo construction of Hiroshi Teshigahara, director of the 1964 film *Woman in the Dunes*.

Martin's project was conceived the year after the 1984 exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, "Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," a show pilloried for displaying a paternalistic attitude toward tribal art. While "Magiciens" claimed to present Western and non-Western works on equal terms, for many the title evoked associations of the non-Western with the irrational and the exotic. Critics took Martin's talk of his aesthetic intuition to suggest the perspective of colonizers lording over the colonized, and pointed to the positioning of Richard Long's mud circle high above the Australian aboriginal painting on the floor as a metaphor for the show's true stance.

Despite much ideological and curatorial criticism, the exhibition opened the door to contemporary art from outside the centers being more widely shown in Western museums and commercial galleries, and facilitated international success for artists from outside Europe and North America. Little of their work, however, was of the folk or ritual forms conspicuous in "Magiciens." And as international biennials expanded in the 1990s, the conceptual opposition of Western and non-Western would be overwhelmed by a single category of the global contemporary.

← Catalog cover for the exhibition "Magiciens de la Terre," 1989.

↓ At the Grande Halle de la Villette, two key works from the Western and non-Western traditions were juxtaposed: on the floor is a ceremonial piece titled *Yam Dreaming*, by the Aboriginal Australian Yuendumu community. On the wall is English artist Richard Long's *Red Earth Circle*, which was made with clay from the River Avon, in England. To the right is Esther Mahlang's *House*. Beyond this can be glimpsed Juan Muñoz's *Three Columns and a Dwarf*.

→ View of the Grande Halle de la Villette, with (from back) Richard Long's *Red Earth Circle*, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen's *From the Entropic Library*, and the tall, wedge-like piece by Nera Jambruk and peope of the Apengaï village, Papua New Guinea. The sculpture reflects the origin-myth of the clan, and was commissioned in 1987 during a trip to Papua New Guinea by Jean-Hubert Martin and Lawrence Weiner. In the center is Mario Merz's untitled cone. To the right are seven sculpted coffins by Kane Kwei and Paa Joe from Ghana. From left to right, these are *Mercedes*, *Onions*, *House*, *Lobster*, *Fish*, *Elephant*, and *Eagle*. It is said that this tradition of sculpted coffins began when Kane Kwei's uncle, who was a fisherman, asked his carpenter nephew to make him a boat-shaped coffin in which he could be buried when he died.

↘ At the Grande Halle de la Villette, Danish artist Per Kirkeby presented six monumental bronzes that combined figurative, landscape, and architectural concerns. Kirkeby had trained as a geologist and taken part in various expeditions to Greenland.

← At the Grande Halle de la Villette, Giovanni Anselmo's *Towards North and Through* was a granite monolith that had been cut in two, with a compass installed on top.

↓ Nigerian sculptor Sunday Jack Akpan presented eleven funeral sculptures, which were created by the artist in Paris. The life-size effigies, seen here in the Grande Halle de la Villette, are designed to perpetuate the memory of the deceased.

↑ At the Grande Halle de la Villette, Benin artist Cyprien Tokoudagba presented his family's "voodoo temple," a reconstructed temple sanctuary, and an ensemble of seven figurative sculptures.

← Aboriginal Australian Jimmy Wululu's twelve wooden posts, which were hollowed out and painted with ocher and synthetic polymer. The burial poles are intended to receive the bones of the dead; the painted marks represent the scales of catfish. Exhibited in the Grande Halle de la Villette.

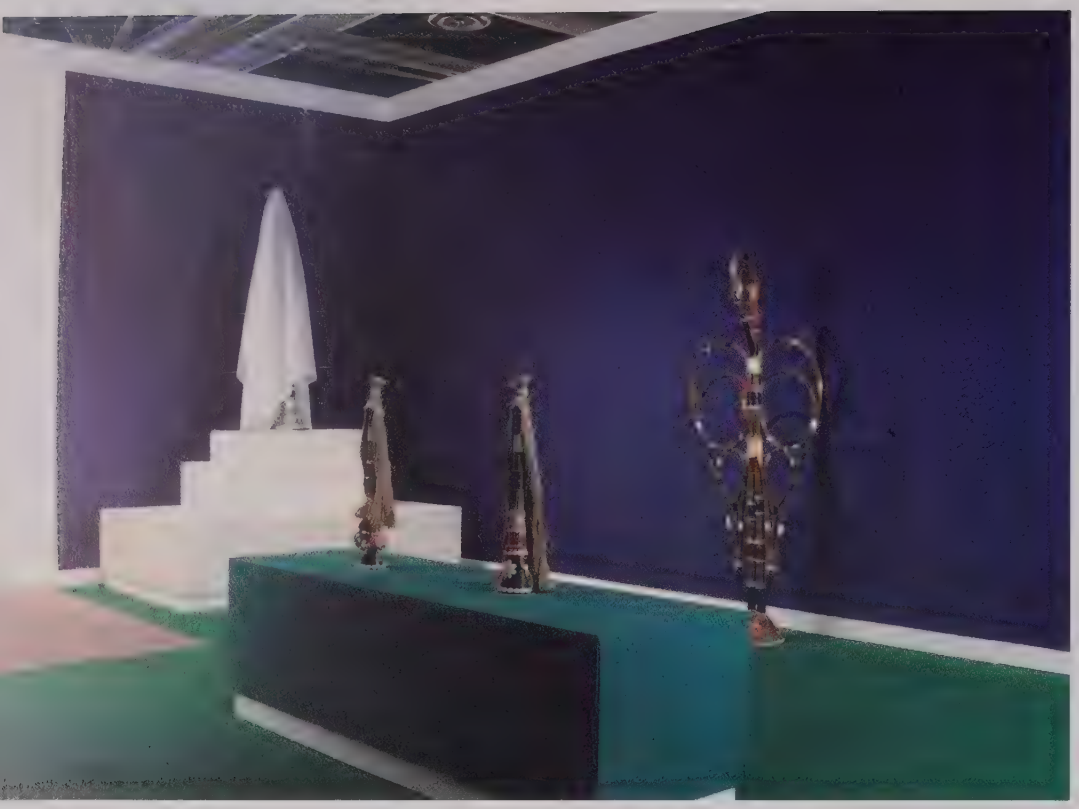
←← At the Grande Halle de la Villette, Huang Yongping's installation *Reptiles* consisted of piles of Chinese newspapers that had been pulped in washing machines, which were also on display. These were formed into "tombs" in the shape of tortoises (symbols of longevity in China), and oriented North-South in accordance with geomancy.

↙ ↙ Cuban artist José Bédia presented *He Lives on the Line*, an installation that references Santeria (a Cuban religion that mixes African and Catholic beliefs), and a tradition of American blues songs about the folk hero John Henry, which describe the use of forced labor to build the railways.

↖ Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary's *The Pole of the Sphere*. Houshiary's work draws on a number of influences, including Sufi mysticism.

← The Zairian artist Bodys Isek Kingelez exhibited seven maquettes, including *New Paris (Consequence of French Modernism), Germany in 2000, Italy and Fallen Architecture, Cross the Sky, Mausoleum Kingelez*, and *The French Mediterranean*.

↙ Spanish artist Juan Muñoz's *Three Columns and a Dwarf*, a work that explored the fusion of Arabic and Spanish cultures.



← Didi, an artist and priest of the Yoruba Nago rite Candomblé in Salvador de Bahia, presented sculptures inspired by Orishas (Yoruba spirits). The space was built and painted according to the specific instructions of the artist. Works from left to right: *Opà Aiye-Orun* (*Sceptre of Existence*), *Óbá Dena* (*Two sentinels of the King of the Earth*); *Opà Eye* (*Scepter Ancestral Mother*).

↓ Installation view in the Centre Georges Pompidou, showing works by the Mexican sculptor Felipe Linares, whose "monsters" were based on the tradition of Mexican All Saints Day celebrations.

PREFACE

Jean-Hubert Martin

Magiciens de la Terre (exh. cat.), 1989

Unlike a mere collection of objects, the exhibition gathers durable or ephemeral works—objects—produced by authors not only clearly identified but whom we have even visited at home. All these objects, from here and elsewhere, have in common that they have an aura. These are not mere objects or tools for practical and material use. They are intended to act on the mind and on the ideas of which they are products. They are containers of metaphysical values. They communicate a sense.

It is with the word "magic" that we described the influence exerted by powerful and inexplicable art. It seemed appropriate to the extent that it was prudent to avoid in the title the word "art," which would have been used from the outset to label the creations of societies that do not know the concept. To us, whether the artists claim emptiness or adopt a completely materialistic approach seems to me not inherently contradictory. Rather, these works are the result of desires and complex decisions, they are charged with intentions, aspirations, and critical strategies. They soon share our cultural values—and financial ones—and are sources of transformative ideas. [...]

THE WHOLE EARTH SHOW

Benjamin H. D. Buchloh
and Jean-Hubert Martin

Art in America, July 1989

JEAN-HUBERT MARTIN: Obviously the problem of center and periphery has been reflected in European-American avant-garde culture in recent years, but our exhibition project "Magiciens de la Terre" is a departure from that.

First of all, already on the geographical level we want to reflect contemporary art production on a global, worldwide scale. But the questions of center and periphery have also been asked with regard to authorship and oeuvre, especially since, in a number of the contexts with which we will be dealing, the artist's role and the object's functions are defined in a manner entirely different from our European way of thinking. As for the problem of marginality, it is difficult and delicate to include artists from different geopolitical contexts in an exhibition of Western (Euro-American) contemporary art, the dominant art of the centers. But we come to recognize that in order to have a center you need margins and the inverse is true as well. Therefore "Magiciens de la Terre" will invite half of its approximately one hundred artists from marginal contexts, artists practically non-existent in the awareness of the contemporary art world.

BENJAMIN BUCHLOH: *How will you go about this project without falling precisely into the worst of all traps, seemingly inevitable: to deploy once again ethnocentric and hegemonic criteria in the selection of the participants and their works for the exhibition?*

J.-H. M.: I agree, this is, in fact, the first trap one thinks of, but I would immediately argue that it is actually an inevitable trap. It would be worse to pretend that one could organize such an exhibition from an "objective, unacculturated" perspective, a "decentered" point of view precisely. How could one find a "correct" perspective? By including artists on a proportional scale, or by having the selections made by cultural functionaries in each country, whose principles are infinitely less elaborate than ours? Or by political commissaries from UNESCO, according to the size of the population of each country? I do not believe that this is possible. It would throw us back into the worst mistakes from the beginning of the Paris Biennale when the artists were selected by national commissaries who only chose what they considered to merit the official stamp of cultural and political authority. It was bound to become a disaster of officious and official culture. Therefore, I have argued for the exact opposite: since we are dealing with objects of visual and sensual experience, let us really look at them from the perspective of our culture. I want to play the role of somebody who selects these objects from totally different cultures by artistic intuition alone. My approach—in a way—will therefore be the opposite of what you suggest: I will select these objects from the various cultures according to my own history and my own sensibility. But obviously I also want to incorporate the critical reflections on the problem of ethnocentrism, the relativity of culture, and intercultural relations that contemporary anthropology provides.

B. B.: *Which are the self-critical and corrective elements in your method and procedure? Are you actually working with anthropologists and ethnographers on this project, and with specialists from within the cultures that you approach from the outside?*

J.-H. M.: Yes, I have collaborated with numerous anthropologists and ethnographers in the preparation of this project. This collaboration has proven to be very fertile since it has helped to assess the role of the individual artist in the various societies, their specialized activities, and the functions of their formal and visual languages. By the way, our exhibition project emerges at a moment when many anthropologists have started to ask themselves why they have privileged myth and language traditionally over the sign of visual objects. The corrective critical reflections I am primarily thinking of are ethnographic theories of ethnocentrism as they have been developed over the last twenty or more years. I have also benefitted from the advice of ethnographers and specialists of local and regional cultures when it came to obtaining precise information in order to prepare research and travels. In some cases we have conducted these exploratory travels in the company of ethnographers. We went, for example, to Papua New Guinea in the company of François Lupu.

But let us not forget, after all, I have to think of this project as an "exhibition." That is, if an ethnographer suggests a particular example of a cult, let us say in a society of the Pacific, but the objects of this culture would not communicate sufficiently with a Western spectator in a visual-sensuous manner, I would refrain from exhibiting them. Certain cult objects may have an enormous spiritual power, but when transplanted from their context into an art exhibition they lose their qualities and at best generate misunderstandings, even if one attaches long

didactic explanatory labels to them. In the same manner I had to exclude a number of artisanal objects, since many of the societies we are looking at actually do not differentiate between artist and artisan. [...]

Concerning the problem of the cultural object and its context I would like to make two arguments. First of all, when it comes to foreign literature, music, and theater, nobody ever asks this question, and we accept translation—which we know to be most often a falsification—as a form of mediation. Now you might argue that these are temporal and aural forms of artistic experience, different from the spatial and visual objects we are dealing with. Here different modes of reception clearly apply and a Western viewer sees in a manner altogether different from an Asian viewer, even though the moment of retinal experience is actually identical. But, nevertheless, to argue therefore that it is impossible to present visual-spatial objects outside of their cultural context seems absolutely horrible to me when, in fact, since centuries this type of communication has occurred within the fields of literature for example. That is my first argument [...]

But let me first make my second argument. A criticism instantly voiced with regard to this project is the supposed problem of decontextualization and the betrayal of the other cultures. Yes, the objects will be displaced from their functional context and they will be shown in a museum and an exhibition institution in Paris. But we will display them in a manner that has never before been employed with regard to objects from the Third World. That is, the makers of the objects will be present for the most part, and I will avoid finished moveable objects as much as possible. I will favor actual "installations" (as we say in our jargon) made by the artists specifically for this particular occasion. Works of art are always the result of a ritual or a ceremony, and that is just as true for a famous painter of the nineteenth century where—in a manner of speaking—we are looking at a "mere residue" as well. One always speaks of the problem of "context" when it come to other cultures, as though the same problem would not emerge for us in the confrontation with a medieval miniature or even a Rembrandt painting when we visit the museum. Only a few specialists really know anything at all about the context of these objects, even though we would claim that these objects constitute our cultural tradition. I know that it is dangerous to extricate cultural objects from other civilizations, but we can also learn from these civilizations, which, just like ours, are engaged in a search for spirituality.

B. B.: *This concept of an abstract transhistorical experience of "spirituality" seems to be at the core of your project. In that respect it reminds me of the exhibition "Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art," which took place at the Museum of Modern Art in 1984. There a presumed spirituality was equally placed at the center of the exhibition, operating regardless of social and political context, or of technological development of the particular social formations.*

Don't you think that the search for the (re-)discovery of spirituality originates in the disavowal of the politics of everyday life?

J.-H. M.: Not at all. As you will recall, the main criticism leveled at this exhibition at the time was that it was a formalist project. To me it seems important to emphasize the functional rather than the formal aspects of that spirituality (after all, magic practices are functional practices). Those objects that act in their spiritual function, on the human mind, objects that exist in all societies, are the ones of interest to our exhibition. After all, the works of art cannot simply be reduced to a retinal experience alone. They possess an aura that initiates these mental experiences. I would go even further and argue that precisely those artistic objects that were created twenty years ago by artists with the explicit desire to reduce the auratic nature of the work of art by emphasizing its material abjectness, appear now as the most spiritual ones. In fact, if you talk to the artists of that generation you will often encounter their own involvement with the concept of the "magic" in works of art. We have to admit that there is a sphere of social experience that has taken over the space of religion, and while it does not fulfill religion's communal functions, it involves large segments of our society.

THE WHOLE EARTH SHOW, PART II

Eleanor Heartney
Art in America, July 1989

[...] The exhibition, which continues until 14 August and will not travel, is spread over two sites. At the Pompidou Center, works are arranged in small rooms in the familiar group-show format, while within the open, glass-enclosed space of the Grand Hall at La Villette one feels at times as if one had wandered into an ethnographic museum or one of those grand nineteenth-century expositions of art and culture. This impression is enhanced by the presence in the Grand Hall of a variety of re-creations of traditional religious and ceremonial structures. There is, for instance, an intricately carved house whose centerpiece is an elaborate mandala from Nepal, which was created by three Buddhist monks laboriously blowing colored sand through straws in the Grand Hall for a couple of weeks before the exhibition opening. Nearby the facade of a Benin voodoo house provides the backdrop for an arrangement of cult statues whose carnivalesque air is mixed with intimations of ritual violence. The work's creator, Cyprien Tokoudagba, found it necessary to sacrifice a chicken (in private) to ensure that the higher powers would not be angered by the inclusion of these magical objects in an art show.

Works like these, so far removed from Western definitions of art, suffer most from the curatorial decision to include only the names of each work's creator and geographical origin in the wall labels.

Intended to ensure all works equal treatment, the resulting lack of information encourages viewers to apply pre-existing Western aesthetic standards to objects where such standards are irrelevant. This is less a problem with works that belong to the "evolving" category and reveal a self-conscious interface with Western culture, modern technology, or the world art market. The Yuendumi, for instance, are a group of Australian Aborigines whose sand paintings play a role in their initiation rites and normally are constructed in the desert. Recently, however, in response to Western

interest, the Yuendumi, like other aboriginal groups, have begun creating paintings for exhibitions such as this one. Eager to participate in the Western art establishment, they enthusiastically welcomed the placement of a color-coordinated mud circle by Richard Long on the adjacent wall. [...]

The most interesting works in the show—and the ones around which a more coherent exhibition might have been built—were produced by non-Western artists conversant with the subtleties of Western art and culture and interested in the interplay between these traditions and their own. Japanese artist Hiroshi Teshigahara, better known in the West as the director of the film *Woman in the Dunes*, created the most striking installation at the Pompidou. Mimicking the building's Pop-Constructivist architecture, he created a coiling bamboo corridor nestled next to a glass wall through which a visitor can glimpse one of the glass tubes that are the Pompidou's trademark. "Japonesque" in spirit and material, "Western" in form and context, the work straddles cultures in an extremely sophisticated manner.

Other works in this category are more pointed in their presentation of intercultural tensions. Rasheed Araeen, a Pakistani artist who has lived in London for twenty years, frames his reflections on Britain's lingering neocolonialism in works that adopt a very up-to-date mix of photographs, text, and minimalist and constructivist forms. His contribution to the exhibition plays upon a series of confrontational juxtapositions: repeated images of modern British riot police framing a shot of a voluptuous harem girl, for instance, or in the middle of the room, an open cube structure reminiscent of the early work of Sol LeWitt poised above a pile of animal bones.

Cheri Samba, from Zaire, comes across as an African Sue Coe (who, curiously, was not in the show). Trained as an illustrator, he employs the form of the propaganda poster to make uncompromising and sometimes wickedly funny observations about the seamier aspects of contemporary African life. Among the paintings, which generally contain text (often presented as dialogue between figures drawn in a caricatural style), several deal with sexual politics and the disruption of traditional family harmony, while another, in which a motley parade of demonstrators is juxtaposed with an image of a man dying in bed, manages to convey both practical information and a discussion of the social and personal dilemmas presented by AIDS.

More subtly subversive, thanks to its shimmering beauty, is an installation by Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles. He constructed a cave-like enclosure, bathed in golden light with backlit cow bones hanging like stalactites over a thick carpet of gold coins. Connecting floor and ceiling, and suggesting the status of the Brazilian Catholic Church as a link between the worlds of spirit and commerce, is a single stacked column of communion wafers. [...]

OUR BAUHAUS, OTHERS' MUDHOUSE

Rasheed Araeen
Third Text, Spring 1989

[...] "Magiciens de La Terre" has brought to the surface, perhaps unwittingly, some of the questions that are fundamental to the understanding of this exhibition. It would be extremely difficult to discuss all the questions in detail in the space of a single article, let alone find some answers. But I feel compelled to deal with these questions after having seen the exhibition and felt terribly disappointed by the whole enterprise. One would normally feel obliged to be grateful when one is actually a participant in such an international exhibition, but it is also essential that the paternalism of power must constantly be questioned if we are not to be imprisoned by its benevolence. My disappointment with the exhibition is not due to the quality of the work, or the display. In fact, the exhibition looks very attractive; almost all the works are given equal space and are arranged in such a way that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish visually between the "modern" and the "traditional." Having said all this, I must also express my appreciation of some very beautiful works, particularly those of the Chinese, Chilean, and Brazilian artists.

My main criticism concerns the lack of any radical theoretical or conceptual framework that can justify the togetherness of works representing different historical traditions.

It is claimed that all the works, irrespective of their cultural origin, are presented "on equal terms." But is this "equality" not an illusion? How is this "equality" achieved, if not by ignoring the differences of different works? Of course, the differences have been allowed to enter into a common space. But what is the significance of this entry? Is it possible for "difference" to function critically in a curatorial space where the criticality of "difference" is in fact negated by the illusion of visual similarities and sensibilities of works produced under different systems, displacing the question of the unequal power of different works from the domain of ideology to cultural aesthetics. No wonder the common denominator here is a presumed "magic" of all works that transcends socio-economic determinants. If Western artists sell their work for large sums of money, this is not due to an imperative of power that legitimates their work as precious commodities but the presumed magic of their work! Why does this magic not work in the case of non-European artists?

However, "Magiciens de la Terre" is an extremely important exhibition. Not only for its physical scale—one hundred "artists" from all over the world in an exhibition occupying both the top floor of the Georges Pompidou Center and the Grand Hall of La Villette—but also for its global ambition; not only for its claim to represent many different cultures but also for its presumed intention to question those cultural distinctions that have divided the world. These claims take on a particular significance when viewed in the context of the bicentennial celebration of the French Revolution with its famous proclamation of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. We know what has happened in the whole world since then. If the French Revolution inspired the peoples of the world to seek freedom and equality, it is also now a reminder of the constant failure of its aims. But it seems that the Emperor does not want to be reminded of his

nakedness, not when he is actually wearing so many colorful clothes imported from all over the world. Shouldn't we, in fact, be grateful for an imperial benevolence (the project has cost 3 million pounds) that has enabled magicians from all over the world to participate in and celebrate something whose spirit relates to all peoples? Shouldn't we just do what is expected of us: entertain and not ask silly questions on such an auspicious occasion? [...]

The crisis is in fact of Western humanism; its failure to come to terms with the modern aspiration of the "other." What happened in Iran, for example, is not the result of what Jean-Hubert Martin calls a "search for spirituality," but a direct result of Western imperialism, which frustrated the aspirations and struggles of Iranian people to achieve a modern, secular, and democratic society in the postwar period. The Shah of Iran was not an Oriental despot but an imperial puppet for whom modernism meant imitating everything Western or American. When, in 1972, a museum of modern art was built in Tehran, with American design and technicians, its administration was handed over to an American team; which, of course, spent millions of pounds (Iran's money) buying American works. As for Iranian artists, they were perhaps living in exile in London, Paris, or New York and were ignored on the basis that they were producing "imitations" of Western art.

It is easier to be cynical and dismissive about modernism in Third World countries than to recognize not only those structures that are responsible for what is actually happening in other cultures, but also those assumptions that continually reinforce the marginalization of the Third World.

The example of Iran is an extreme case, but it is meant to be a metaphor. The struggle in Third World countries is not for "spirituality" but for independent societies, which are democratic, modern, and secular, and contemporary art produced in these countries is part of this struggle. The question of socialism is extremely important for us but it does not supersede the present stage of anti-imperialist struggle to claim our independent place in the modern world.

The failure of "Magiciens de la Terre" to take into consideration the present historical and material conditions of other cultures, their aspirations and struggles to enter into the modern world with all its conflicts and contradictions, and what they have actually achieved within these limitations, is to mystify the production of art and to remove it from the question of power and privileges. By this failure it has defeated its own stated objective to provide a viable framework that would break the distinctions and allow a dialogue among the diversity of contemporary art from all over the world.

THE GLOBAL ISSUE

Thomas McEvilly
Artforum, March 1990

Criticism of "Magiciens de la Terre" came from both the right and the left. To rightist critics, the show seemed a destroyer of modernism. The curators had given up the Western claim to being a more advanced civilization; they had given up our long-claimed right to judge other cultures by our own standards, and to treat these judgments as somehow objective. This anxiety must underlie the unpublished remark of a prominent British critic that "Magiciens" marked the end of Western civilization—as if Western civilization were constituted precisely by the claim to hegemony; as if yielding that claim, one yielded all.

Critics approaching from the left expressed unhappiness at how depoliticized the show was. They questioned the motives of the institution, suspecting it of, among other things, attempting to recapture French cultural claims to global relevance. They brought up the tradition of those of the mar French colonialism, sometimes implying that the show might better have transpired in Kinshasa or Djibouti—places where, unfortunately, it probably would not have affected much the way the Western art world operates. They questioned the idea of introducing these artists into the Western market system, like innocent lambs being led to the slaughter. They questioned the imposition of bourgeois individualist values on these artists from supposedly communal societies. They spoke of "Magiciens" as if it were "Primitivism."

The bone everyone has been picking—right, left, or centrist—is the lame curation. The show didn't add up in so many ways, despite the good sense of its underlying premises. I don't argue that point. (In fact, I feel that the show's inconsistencies saved it from the rigidity of a single framework of value.) What I am defending is an idea that I think was never really in question and that I doubt anyone wants directly to attack. All the criticism of the show that I have seen fails to confront the monumental fact that this was the first major exhibition consciously to attempt to discover a postcolonialist way to exhibit objects together. It was a major event in the social history of art, not in its aesthetic history. "Magiciens" opened the door of the long-insular and hermetic Western art world to artists. The question is not really whether the people who opened the door had gravy on their jackets, or slipped and fell as they were opening it. The question is this and only this: as we enter the global village of the 1990s, would any of us really rather that the door remain closed?

Some of the criticism of the show was honorably motivated by a compassionate concern for the Third World artists. This concern arises understandably from a skepticism about whether the door is really open, how far it's open, and how long it will stay open. It has happened before that the Western art market, seeking new goods, has elevated a previously peripheral group to the mainstream and, when it didn't work out financially, ejected them again. (One thinks, for example, of the Mexican muralists of the 1930s and of the graffiti artists of the early 1980s.) But this time greater forces than those of the market seem to be mandating a reassessment of the boundaries of contemporary art. In the next few years we shall see whether down becomes up. It may be that now the deck of cards of Western art history has been thrown irrevocably into the air—that there are unknown elements in the game now, elements not yet under any particular control.

20

EXHIBITION

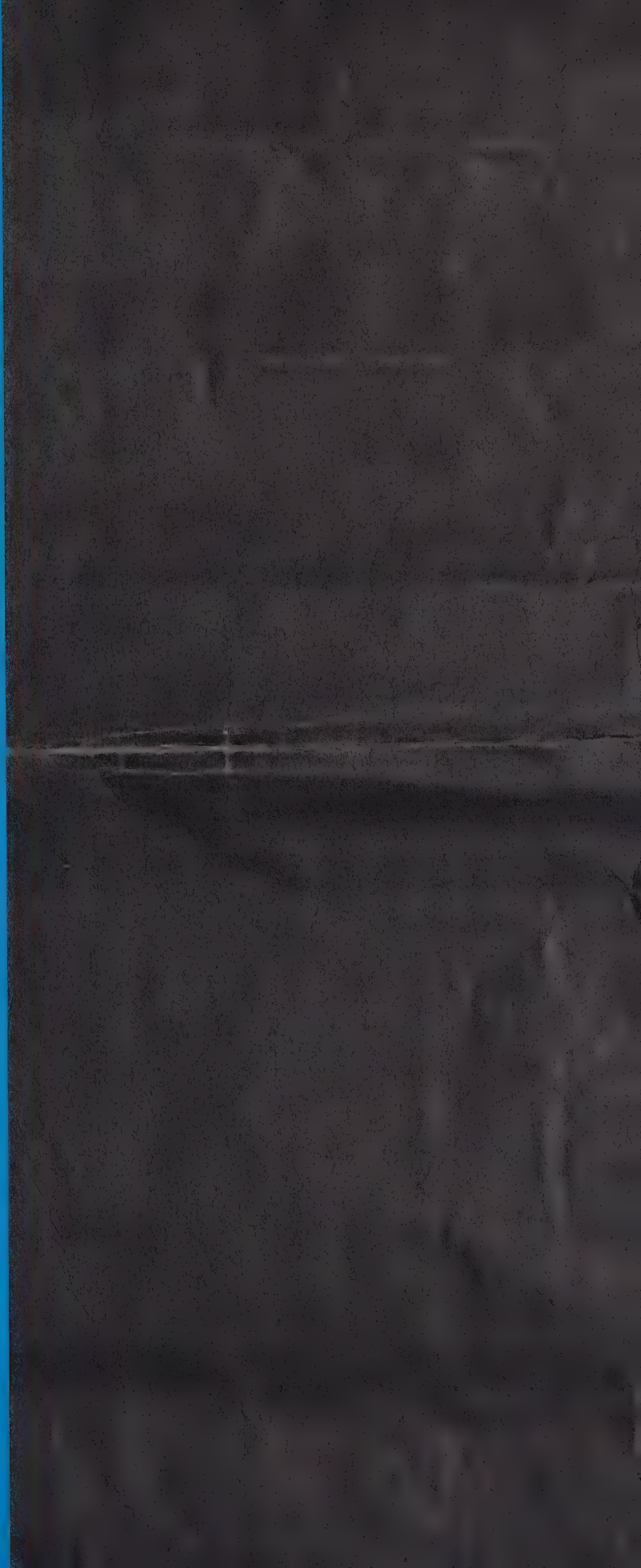
Places with a Past

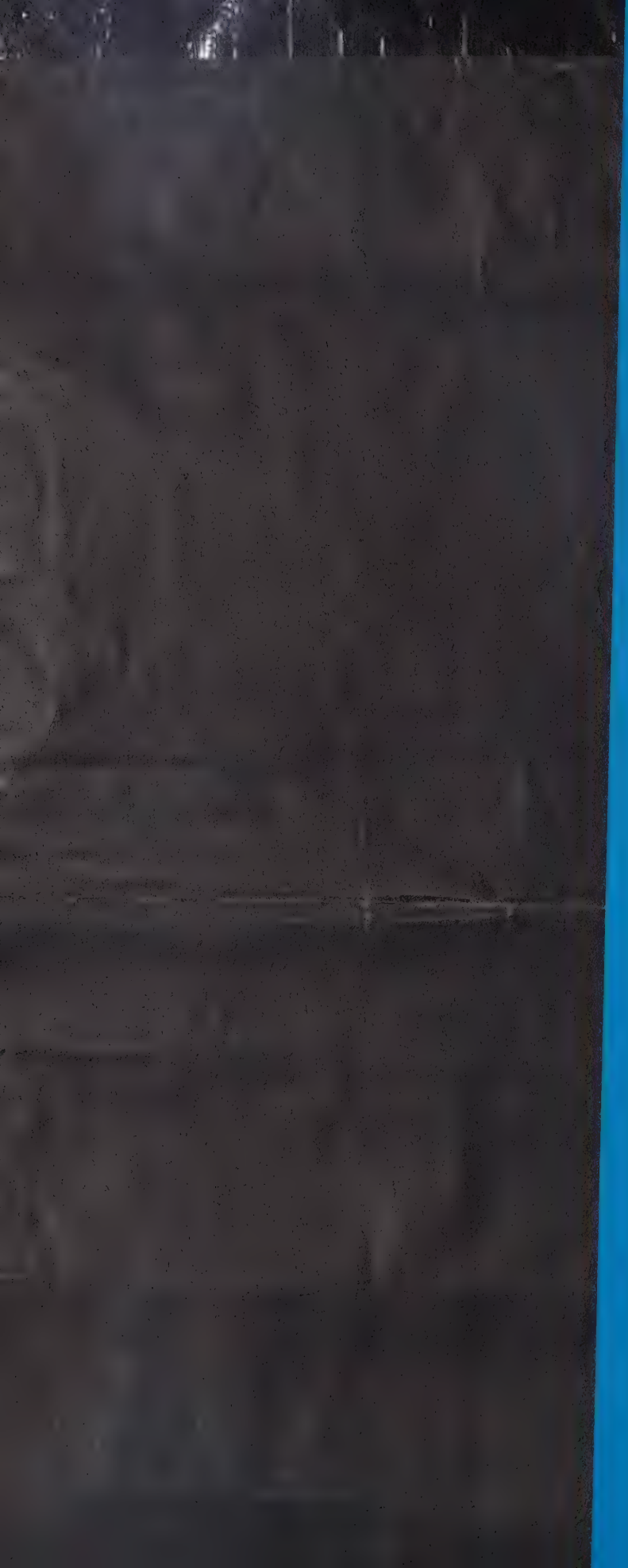
LOCATION

Sites around Charleston, North Carolina

DATE

4 May–4 August 1991





CURATOR
Mary Jane Jacob

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Christian Boltanski, Chris Burden, James Coleman, Houston Conwill, Estella Conwill Majozo, Joseph De Pace, Kate Ericson, Gwylene Gallimard, Antony Gormley, Ann Hamilton, Ian Hamilton Finlay, David Hammons, Ronald Jones, Nurelle Jubelin, Liz Magor, Jean-Marie Maculet, Elizabeth Newman, Alva Rogers, Joyce Scott, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Barbara Steinman, Mel Ziegler

CATALOG
Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art at Charleston's Spoleto Festival. New York: Rizzoli, 1991. With texts by Nigel Redden, Mary Jane Jacob, Theodore Rosengarten, John McWilliams.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 23
Number of works: 18
Total attendance: unknown

Mounted as part of an elite cultural festival, "Places with a Past" combined the practice of commissioning contemporary artist projects in non-art spaces with the use of art for socially constructive purposes. Departing from the notion of public art as the display of sculpture in parks and squares, the show employed historic sites to engage current issues and explore matters of community identity. It was the first large exhibition in the United States to spread throughout a city, building on such European models as "Chambres d'Amis" (1986) and "Sculpture Project Münster" (1987). And being located in Charleston, South Carolina, a center of the nineteenth-century slave trade and site of the first military engagement of the Civil War, it revolved around the quintessentially American subject of race.

The exhibition was organized by Mary Jane Jacob, a former museum curator who had left institutional work to curate location-based projects with artists. It was sponsored by Spoleto Festival USA, an American counterpart to composer Gian Carlo Menotti's music festival in Spoleto, Italy. In 1962, Menotti's festival filled the Umbrian town with art for "Sculture nella Città" ("Sculpture in the City"), which included works commissioned from ten international sculptors. Jacob's show was an updated version for the 1990s, generated by a very different process and presenting a different kind of art.

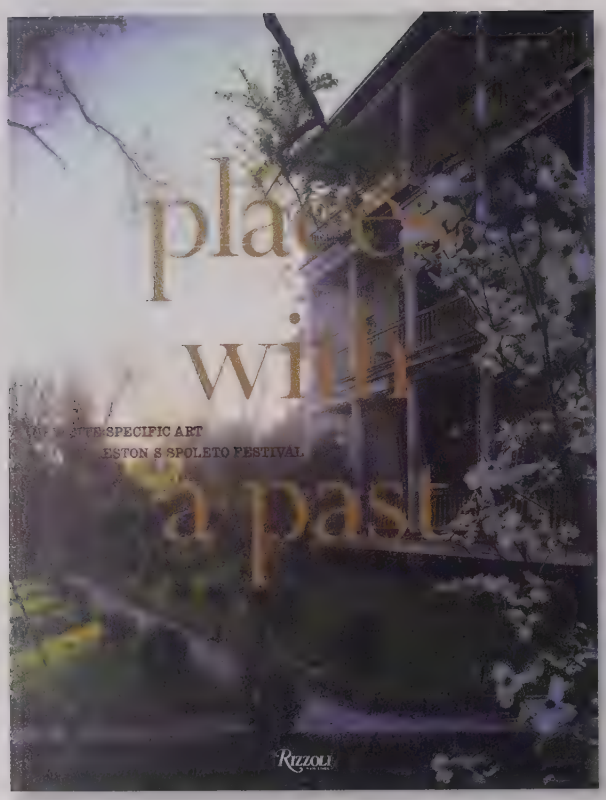
Twenty-three artists were invited to visit Charleston in the year prior to the show, touring the city, meeting local residents, and ultimately selecting an installation site. With a number of the invitees working collectively, the process yielded eighteen projects, virtually all using historically evocative buildings or resonant outdoor locations. The works were to be dismantled after the exhibition. But the two-part project by David Hammons remained at the behest of the local community.

Jacob selected artists whose interests fit with issues of historical memory and its connection to place. Twelve were women, six were African American, and seven of them were from outside the United States. They conceived works for particular sites, their ideas generated in varying degrees by the history of Charleston and the American South, the history of that specific place and its current context. With the exception of the few projects in the Gibbes Museum of Art, the installations were both physically and conceptually bound to their chosen locations.

The topical range of the projects was broad, although most pieces addressed the matter of race. Many works, of course, related to slavery and the Civil War. But others looked at labor or at the city's current racial divide. The two sides of Charleston—the city of elegant Southern tourism, architectural preservation, and the Spoleto festival, and that of a large black community outside the tourist circuit—was evoked throughout the show.

Although the exhibition was applauded in the art press, it was attacked by Gian Carlo Menotti. Calling the installations "silly, sophomoric stunts," he prompted a crisis within Spoleto USA that led to the departure of the festival's general manager and the elimination of its visual arts program for six years. But in 2001, Mary Jane Jacob returned to Charleston and to the Spoleto festival to initiate an ongoing annual series of community-based public art projects.

In the interim, Jacobs developed a socially oriented curatorial practice that focused on artist involvement with local stakeholders. Immediately following "Places with a Past" came "Culture in Action" in Chicago, which over two years generated such cooperative projects as a parade, a candy bar, and a hydroponic garden. Jacob's work challenged the separation of audience and participant, and it was aimed at personal transformation rather than the production of art objects. In this she anticipated the intentions of "relational aesthetics," and promoted a public art grounded in collaboration and social responsibility.



↑ Cover of the catalog, *Places with a Past, New Site-Specific Art at Charleston's Spoleto Festival*, 1991.

↗ View of Charleston, South Carolina, USA, looking across the historic town.

→ View of Charleston, looking down a street toward the large shipping port.

↑ View of the outside of the abandoned French Huguenot building in which Christian Boltanski installed his *Shadows*.

↗ Christian Boltanski's *Shadows*.

→ Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler's *Camouflaged History*, a house painted in an array of colors frequently used on restored houses in Charleston. Ericson and Ziegler also created a palette of colors that might be used for painting other houses in Charleston.

↑ On the lot opposite his *House of the Future*, David Hammons replaced an illegal billboard poster with one of children looking up in a spirit of optimism. Hammons also installed a flagpole with his own version of the Black Nationalist Flag.

←← View of David Hammons' *House of the Future*, a narrow house-cum-sculpture that was constructed on a vacant lot in a predominantly African-American neighborhood in Charleston's East side. Hammons collaborated with the residents to build the work, and residents named the piece. While other works in "Places with a Past" were designed as temporary installations, *House of the Future* has remained.

← Larry Jackson, a local unemployed young man and an aspiring artist, used the *House of the Future* as a studio to work on his paintings of local houses.

↑ Elizabeth Newman's *Honey in the Rock (Got to Feed God Children)*, which was installed in the grand Middleton-Pinckney House. The work explored the history of the black nursemaids who were employed to care for the children of affluent white families.

→→ Elizabeth Newman's *Honey in the Rock (Got to Feed God Children)*.

→ Lorna Simpson and Alva Rogers's *Five Rooms*, which looked at the city's slave past and was installed in an outbuilding for servants at the Governor Bennett House. Along with vocalist–composer Alva Rogers, Simpson presented a story in five chapters, structured by the audio work and the five rooms of the building.

← Liz Magor's *Hallowed Ground*, which looked at the activities of Civil War re-enactment societies. She exhibited her works at the Confederate home for widows and orphans. Inside the building, she presented photographs of the "soldiers," and inside a parlor and on the lawn outside she exhibited numerous black cannonballs.

↓ Magor's *Hallowed Ground*, view of the parlor at the Confederate home for widows and orphans.

→ Ann Hamilton's *Indigo Blue*, an installation comprising a pile of 48,000 items of blue clothing, which referenced work-clothes and the repetitive actions of labor, was installed at 45 Pinckney Street. A performer sat at a nearby table, endlessly erasing words from history books.

↘ Joyce Scott installed her *Believe I've Been Sanctified* in Charleston's Cannon Park. The work consisted of branches from trees felled in a 1989 hurricane, personal artifacts, Chinese beaded curtains, and other materials, which were suspended from four existing columns in the park and arranged around the base.

↑ Christian Boltanski's *Inventory of Objects Belonging to a Young Woman of Charleston*, at the Gibbes Museum of Art. By presenting the belongings of an anonymous female college student as if they were items from the museum's collection, Boltanski's installation played on conventions of museum display.

← Chris Burden's *Three Ghost Ships*, exhibited at the Gibbes Museum of Art. The ships were intended to be unmanned and remotely navigated; the work referenced Charleston's role as a major shipping port.

MAKING HISTORY IN CHARLESTON

Mary Jane Jacob

Places with a Past: New Site–Specific Art at Charleston's Spoleto Festival (exh. cat.), 1991

[...] It is when exhibitions speak about issues related to or inspired by a chosen site, pointing to the contemporary power of the past, and making connections between art and society, that they most fulfill a role that befits their real-life situation, that demonstrates the necessity for this art to be outside museum walls, and, at the same time, impacts the theoretical discourses of art today.

Such was the goal in creating an exhibition for Charleston. While some of the artists chosen had been featured in shows named above or in related exhibitions, others had been inspired to work in this way. Liz Magor, for example, had been moved by Münster [i.e. Sculpture Projects Münster, 1987]. Ann Hamilton had been so impressed by the concept of "Chambres d'Amis" [Ghent, 1986] that she worked to initiate a similar project in 1988 with the Contemporary Arts Forum in Santa Barbara, California, where she was living. The Charleston exhibition presented artists with a new challenge and a new opportunity—to enter into the dialogue of a genre that had already had an impact on their ideas.

"Places with a Past" was the first exhibition in the United States to use fully the city as a site and the latest installment in furthering that dialogue. Charleston proved to be fertile ground. Among the timely issues were those of gender, race, and cultural identity, considerations of difference, the notion of the colonizer-colonized paradigm, ideas of domination and exploitation. These are subjects much in the vanguard of criticism and art-making. Also, for reasons varying from those of critical interest and inquiry to development and public relations expediency, these issues have swept across the museum scene in the United States, not always to be incorporated in meaningful or appropriate programs, but sometimes to satisfy institutional demographic profiles. The actuality of the situation, the fabric of the time and place of Charleston, offered an incredibly rich and meaningful context for the making and siting of publicly visible and physically prominent installations that rang true in their approach to these ideas.

In most cases the artists succeeded in creating works that were truly site-specific, that is, they could not be located elsewhere, or if physically possible to do so, they would have been diminished in the relocation. All but a few were necessarily temporary. The artists chose their sites after a tour of possibilities and from the conversation and research that ensued during their initial visits. The result was art that addressed a location, not just from a design and physical point of view, but also in relation to a social and cultural past. The installations became like chapters in a book that together told a larger, more complete, and alternative story of Charleston.

The artists chosen, while prominent and established in their own right, as a group comprised an unusual ratio of gender, race, and nationality representation. Twelve of the twenty-three artists were women—and women played a major role in Charleston life, but one historically hidden; six black artists responded to the African Diaspora that so affected Charleston's and eventually all of American history; and seven artists from other countries (some also former British colonies) reflected upon their culture's presence through the various immigrant groups that came to build this grand city of the South. At a time in the arts when one speaks of a balance of genders, multicultural representation, and internationalism, this exhibition offered an important opportunity to show what these concepts can mean in the realization of a show.

Today, there is also a shift toward work that has a mission and makes a social statement, staking out a moral position, perhaps in reaction to the prior decade as a period of intensified commercialism and shallowness of content. And while Charleston's subjects and locations brought up social and conceptual issues central to art-making today and to the academic arena in general, ethical and philosophical issues arose that gave pause to the artists in their courses of investigation: can an artist speak for people of another place with whom he or she does not share a common history or cultural tradition; even if one shares a heritage, can he or she alone speak for the community; can a white artist deal with an African American subject; what rules are operative when working collaboratively with a member of the community; how can a community voice and an artistic voice coexist sympathetically; and if the artist collaborates with a member or members of the community, do they speak for the community at large? [...]

In Charleston, the artists encountered a real world of the present with all the texture of the past; the location engendered new works that were both contemporary in their issues and site-specific in their references and physicality. In so doing, "Places with a Past" joined other key shows that have been formative in moving ahead ideas about public art and art in public view, as well as other issues in the field today.

In fact, the temporary exhibition format that includes "Places with a Past," Münster, "TSWA" [i.e "TSWA 3D," United Kingdom, 1987], and others may be today's most important laboratory for questions about art and its public, its surroundings, ideas about commemoration and monument, architecture, design, and identity. Such programs have a vitality and timeliness, and together bring a fresh eye to the critical issues of the moment. They stimulate a dialogue that continues long after the works have been disassembled. They allow artists to take risks, further the discourse, and change the nature of art, in exhibitions that are as much experiments as presentations of works of art. As Antony Gormley said of this and other exhibitions of this genre, they are "to explore the place of art in the world and create a mental space that gets people thinking about their own history." In such a form, artists' decisions matter and ideas are allowed to grow unfettered by a drawn-out time frame or logistical problems that lead to compromises. Public art or a permanent nature, particularly that executed under governmental auspices, is required to be defensible and

therefore often degenerates into a formulaic solution that excludes the most exciting and powerful statements. By contrast, the Charleston exhibition was undertaken by an art patron, Spoleto Festival USA, thus ensuring freedom of artistic expression in the same way museums operate, but with one major difference—it brought in a more diverse and not art-expectant population.

Charleston was the bridge between the works of art and the audience. When there are no doors and admissions are taken away, the audience changes. When an exhibition goes to the public, art may be encountered unwittingly. "Places with a Past," while a profound artistic statement rather than a social manifesto, dealt with issues that directly touch one's daily life. As with all great art, it drew its meaning from human experience, and turned its temporal and spatial particularity into a universal experience.

VISUAL ARTS JOIN SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

Michael Brenson

The New York Times, 27 May 1991

In the days before the opening here of the Spoleto Festival USA's "Places With a Past: New Site-Specific Art in Charleston," which may be the most moving and original exhibition of contemporary art in the United States this season, some of the artists seemed to wonder themselves at the force and meaning of what they had brought into being.

Antony Gormley sat alone in silence by the copper tube dangling from the ceiling like a golden rope or umbilical cord, which he had installed near the top of the old city jail he had just finished turning into an allegory of human transformation.

David Hammons sat on the sidewalk on America Street deliberating upon his House of the Future, an amazingly eccentric, barely functional two-story edifice, roughly 6 feet [1.8 meters] wide and 20 feet [6 meters] long, pieced together with found columns, a found door, and scraps of wood. Even as he sat there, it was becoming increasingly difficult to tell who the real architect was, Mr. Hammons or the residents of the black neighborhood, although only he could be responsible for such an inspired and unpredictable communal invention.

Joyce Scott—whose mother, once a sharecropper in South Carolina, contributed to her grandly theatrical installation—at times just sat on the ground and stared at the rustling beads she had hung like weeping willow branches from the tops of four columns standing at the edge of a park, and at her suspended black tree dangling like a burned, lynched figure rising from the ashes of the painted logs beneath it.

This year the Spoleto Festival decided to treat the visual arts with the same seriousness with which it has treated opera, theater, and dance, and it has done so in style. This exhibition, which opened on 24 May, is unusually concentrated and pure. The artists chose their own sites. There is no evident dealer or collector involvement and no smell of power or money. The art is impermanent. When the exhibition ends on 4 August, almost everything will be dismantled.

All seventeen installations are rooted in Charleston and its history. The nineteen artists—black and white, male and female, from Canada, Europe, and Australia as well as from the United States—explore Charleston and slavery, Charleston and the military, Charleston and religion, Charleston and its devotion to a glorified view of its past. A number of installations were conceived for old or dilapidated buildings, some for private homes. Some artists found the stories they needed to tell in a pump house, or in the Customs House, or in a church. Very little of the work is didactic. Almost all the artists came to Charleston to learn from the city, not to tell its citizens what to think.

The exhibition proves that art made for a specific site and shaped by a social or political orientation has no intrinsic limits. The best work belongs to Charleston and its history and yet goes well beyond them in implication and scope. In this rich and complex 300-year-old city, with its almost fanatical commitment to architectural preservation and with its magnificent yet seemingly impenetrable facades, artists in this show found themselves struggling with age-old issues of appearance and reality, memory and transcendence, life and death.

Along the dark corridor of a Confederate widows' home, Liz Magor has hung photographs that look as if they were taken during the Civil War. But they were in fact recently taken at re-enactments of Civil War events, re-enactments whose accuracy was largely determined from Civil War photographs. To experience these static images of men and women posing in the garb of the time, staging heroic battles and acting out moments of camaraderie, sacrifice and death, is to enter a world in which past and present, fact and fiction, truth and delusion collide.

The exhibition is a tribute to Nigel Redden, the festival's general manager, who conceived of an ambitious art event that would use and call attention to the resources of the city. Its cost, paid in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and private foundations, is now estimated at more than $800,000.

But most of all, the exhibition is a tribute to Mary Jane Jacob, a former curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and in Chicago, where she is now a freelance curator. She selected the artists, led them through Charleston, negotiated their sites, and maintained constant dialogue with residents and officials of a city that had no experience with this kind of art.

The sailing was not always smooth. The exhibition did not appeal to Gian Carlo Menotti, the founder and artistic director of the Spoleto Festival USA., who threatened to resign over it at a board meeting last October. "It was not his idea of art," said Claudia Keenan of the festival's press office. At the same meeting, however, he agreed to go along with what the board wanted. "He has in some ways resigned himself to the show," Ms. Keenan said.

If "Places With a Past" demonstrates the maturation of a new kind of art, it also reflects a new attitude toward history. For the artists in the show, there is not one history but many. Almost all of them have a need—almost a mission—to bring into the open histories that remain largely unrecognized or unwritten.

Walking through Ann Hamilton's 14,000-pound tumulus of blue work shirts and pants glowing in the natural light of an abandoned garage on Indigo Street—with the names of the men who wore the shirts still on the pockets or collars—it is possible to feel the presence of a mountain of forgotten people. For the duration of the exhibition, someone, sometimes the artist herself, will sit behind the mound and erase the kinds of history books (with blue covers) many Americans grew up with.

Walking through Elizabeth Newman's installation, on the top floor of a four-story house that was once a waterworks, listening to a recorded lullaby and to the continuous running of hot water in an old bathtub, seeing a photograph of a black nursemaid and a white child, there is a clear sense of the role black nursemaids played, and still play, in Charleston life. And because of the seven little chairs and seven glasses of honey and the overwhelming smell of talcum powder, the installation also bears the full-bodied presence of children.

Walking through Lorna Simpson's installation in five rooms of a former slave quarters, seeing the names of slave ships and looking at black baby dolls suggesting infant mortality and seeing photographs of trees in the garden while listening to Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit," there is a sense of the passage of slaves from Africa to Charleston and their lives there.

For people unfamiliar with this kind of work, the first question is likely to be: Is this art? It certainly is. The best artists in the show think in images and have a strong feeling for materials, and they are determined to use images and materials in a sensuous, physical way. Although the works are first and foremost about content, their formal power can be startling. Ms. Hamilton's glowing blue mound, with its shirts and pants stacked like bodies, is a visual tour de force.

Only a handful of works in the show are unsuccessful. Ian Hamilton Finlay's hive- and medallion-shaped memorial to the 1942 Battle of Midway, citing the names of destroyed Japanese ships as well as of the carrier *Yorktown*, is so inconsequential that it might as well not exist. James Coleman's slide projection in a parish, based on an inaccurate Currier & Ives print of the Battle of Bull Run, is better suited to a classroom. Cindy Sherman's photographs of body parts, primarily feet, hands, and skulls, installed near the entrance to the Gibbes Museum of Art—the reference point for the exhibition—would be more at home in a New York gallery.

Some works are worth preserving. The House of the Future has brought money and attention to the black section of Charleston. Because of Mr. Hammons, a dirt mound diagonally across from his magically illogical house is to become a little park. Instead of a billboard advertising cigarettes there will be a photograph of black children staring at a black nationalist flag rising out of the mound like the flag out of the sculptural mound of Iwo Jima.

Mr. Gormley's installation unfolds over seven rooms of a worn but seemingly indestructible jail built in 1802 and closed in 1939. All the doors and windows are now open so that wind circulates through the cells and everything is illuminated by natural light. The aim, Mr. Gormley said, was to take this building with its specific history of confinement and "liberate it."

The floor of one room is packed with an army of 20,000 hand-size terra-cotta figures facing the door. A nearby room is empty except for three large rolling iron globes. The floor of a third room is covered with mud from the harbor and water from the sea. In the room directly across from it, five figures, all lead and fiberglass and made from a mold of the artist's body, are embedded in the ceiling: they could be lynched but the way they defy gravity also makes it seem as if they are walking on a plateau of air.

Two smaller rooms contain giant seeds (made of plaster, oyster shells, and mica) that are both massive and light (they suggest clouds) and seem swollen to the point of exploding. Concealed inside each one is a male figure. The mouths and penises of the figures within the eggs are connected by tubes. They face the same wall, like prisoners in different cells trying to communicate.

The culmination of the installation is the golden copper rope or umbilical cord, alone in a room with rusted walls that seem like flayed skin, carrying the journey from mud and water and fertilization to the sky. This visceral, multi-layered, and richly textured work carries within it the feeling for the past and the call to consciousness and transformation that is being issued by almost every artist in one of the most visceral, multi-layered, and richly textured exhibitions this year.

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, "PLACES WITH A PAST"

Lynne Cooke

Burlington Magazine, September 1991

Over the past few years installation work has begun to attract the kind of attention it clearly warrants—from artists and audiences alike. Increasingly, museums and temporary exhibition venues as well as galleries put on shows of environmental work that in previous decades was more often the province of "alternative" venues.

For most of the 1980s, Matt's Gallery in London or the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh were virtually lone outposts, doggedly singular in their commitment to site-specific work. Today, however, a wide range of work of this type, not all of it temporary and much of it site-sensitive rather than site-specific (in that the piece can be reconstructed for another sympathetic venue on another occasion), is gaining visibility and support.

Part of this has come about through renewed attention to such revered artists as Joseph Beuys, much of whose production took this form, notwithstanding the very real problems of the posthumous installation of his work. Yet Beuys's legacy is but one strand woven by younger artists as they explore installation possibilities that were not exhausted in the later 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, so pervasive has the mode become that some artists have even begun treating the making of an exhibition as the occasion for an "installation," even if the work subsequently—and by design—is dismembered for individual sale.

If there is something opportunistic about treating such displays of what are ultimately autonomous objects as the components of an installation, the most challenging work generally eschews such glib, comfortable ends, and can only be reconstructed, if at all, with the full involvement of its maker present to readjust and readapt the piece to the change in circumstances. Many artists tackle the economic constraints inherent in such a way of working by making smaller self-contained works for the market.

Not surprisingly, as seen in the cases of Christian Boltanski and Jessica Stockholder, to take two very different figures, their gallery pieces rarely have the richness, density, and depth of expression attained in the one-off works made in response to the challenge of a particular site. Few of Boltanski's numerous recent gallery and museum shows have stimulated anything that approaches the haunting potency of his contributions to two off-site shows, "Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit," in Berlin last year, and "Places with a Past," in Charleston, South Carolina this summer (to 4 August). Against this background, the commitment to installation work announced by the new Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt indicates a worthy and welcome, but arguably problematic, agenda.

In recent years, the best off-site work has undoubtedly been seen in temporary exhibitions, such as the two cited above, both of which were indebted to that landmark show of the late 1980s, Skulptur Projekte, held in Münster in 1987. There, as in Berlin and Charleston, the artists chose sites, both public and private, spread throughout the city, and responded as much to Münster's historical and sociocultural character as to its physical terrain.

"Places with a Past," the largest show of its type to be staged in the United States, carries forward this model with great effectiveness. That the seventeen sites outside the museum are in almost every case more telling than those by Christian Boltanski (one of two parts), Chris Burden, and Cindy Sherman housed in the Charleston Museum itself says something significant about the richness of opportunity and depth of engagement that the curator, Mary Jane Jacob, was able to inspire in those artists prepared to work at length with the context. What constitutes the "past" of the exhibition's title was interpreted as encompassing the economic, social, and cultural history of Charleston, manifested in issues such as warfare, slavery, class, sexuality, race, gender, religion, and labor.

Both the range of the exhibition and the selection of the participants were well judged. The nineteen contributors (there are two couples) were nicely balanced in terms of age, ethnic background, experience, and origins, with as many women artists as men, and as many non-Americans as Americans. There were several local artists, several recently acclaimed figures, such as Ann Hamilton and David Hammons, and several newly emerging artists, not least Narelle Jubelin from Australia and Elizabeth Newman from Chicago. Thus the show provided a welcome opportunity for women and for African Americans to contribute to the contemporary re-reading of the past of the United States, as well as for artists from countries (such as Australia and Canada) with similar histories of settlement, to engage forcefully and relevantly with the debate.

While several artists failed to resist the temptation to become didactic, the most eloquent works refrained from engaging in history lessons, addressing issues specific to the context, but not local in any narrow sense. For example, James Coleman restaged a battle from the Civil War inaccurately represented in a famous Currier & Ives print. His photographs did not correct it as the local re-enactors had hoped but were projected in overlapping slow-dissolve images that vividly showed the impossibility of taking a single coherent viewpoint, and of separating reality from illusion. Ann Hamilton, by contrast, piled together some 1,400 pounds of used work clothing into a tumulus shape in a former garage on Indigo Street, the area of Charleston where the dye used to be manufactured.

Each of these garments still carried the tag that identified its wearer by number. Only after entering the somber space did one see positioned at a table behind the mound a solitary figure erasing the text from standard history books. Above and to one side was a small elevated room from which the manager could survey the work under his purview; here were hung sacks of soya beans and rags of undyed cloth. The layering of the imagery and the interweaving of references were conveyed in ways that resist analytical description: the power of the piece lay in its presence, in the singularity of the experience. The impact of the largest works, such as these two, left viewers curious for more information about the contexts alluded to, but equally able to refer them to their own experience. The works, therefore, spoke equally if in different voices to the local audience as well as to visitors to the city.

The most effective installations tended to be in the least grand or resonant sites. Too often—as with the Old Jail, where Antony Gormley's work was located—the city's landmarks are so loaded with associations that they resisted inflection and negotiation, causing the artist to resort to rhetoric, or to what became in effect deft embellishment. Where the initial sites were modest and undistinguished, as is the case of those chosen by Hamilton, David Hammons, and Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler, the results were more fully fused, and hence more memorable. Meaning was neither imposed nor merely reaffirmed, but was conjured freshly out of aspects of the site that were occluded, ignored, or even over-obvious. If the premises and structure of this show were familiar, its memorable results attest to the continuing validity of this model for exhibition-making, as well as to the strength of work made in response to carefully constructed imitations that stimulate and challenge artists to move beyond the expected.

21

EXHIBITION

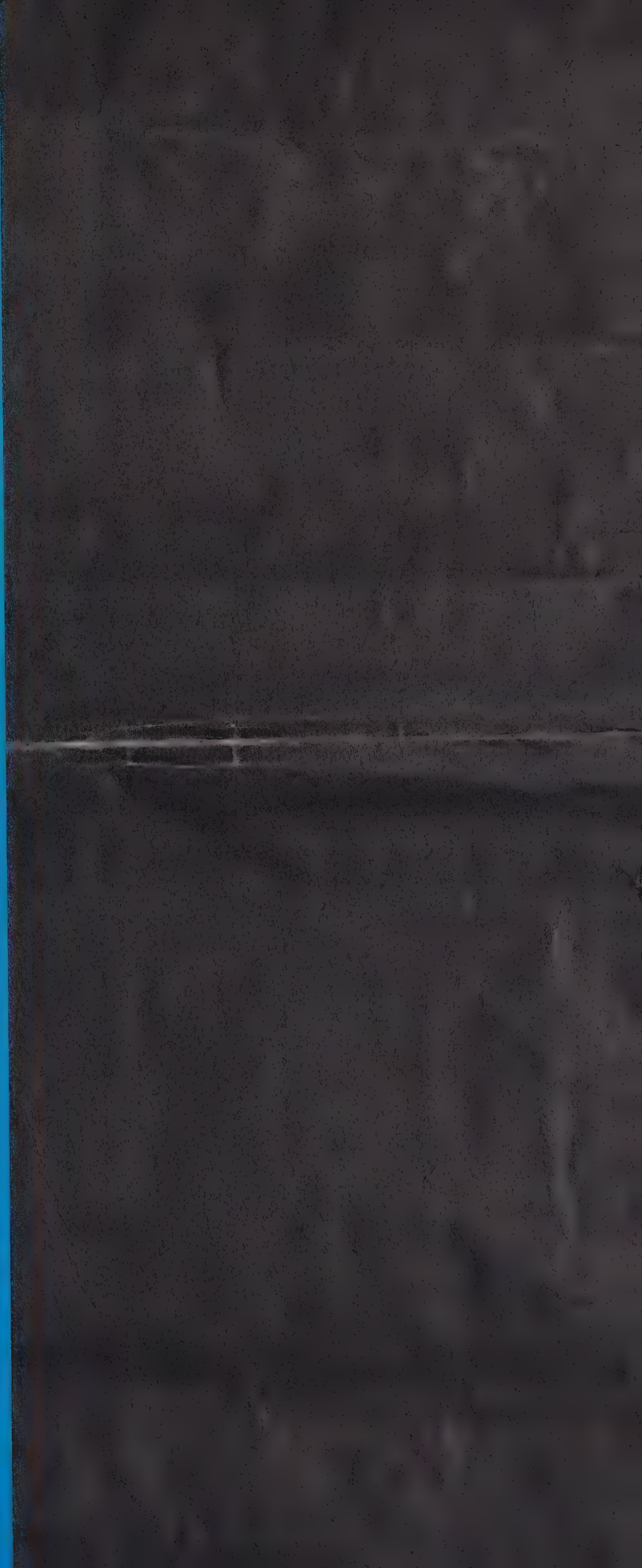
Whitney Biennial

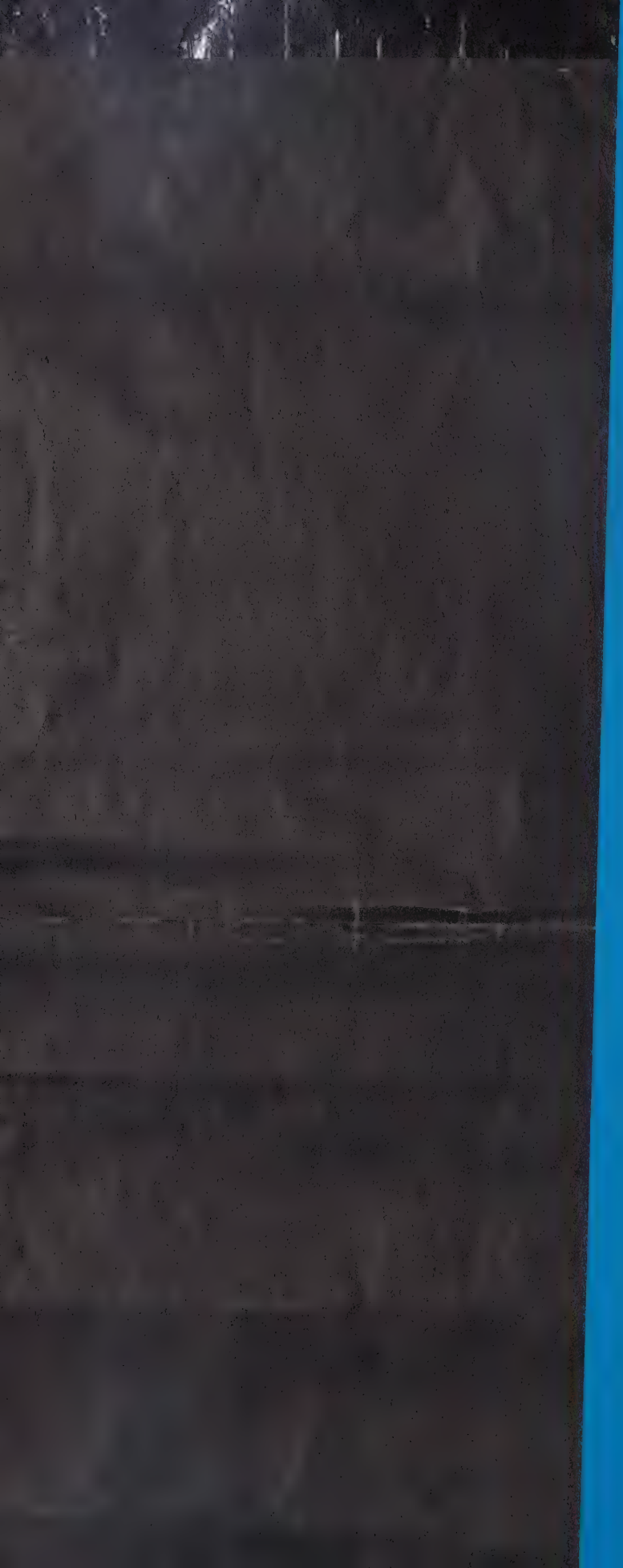
LOCATION

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

DATE

17 February–31 June 1993





CURATORS

Elisabeth Sussman with Thelma Golden, John G. Hanhardt, and Lisa Phillips

ITINERARY

None

ARTISTS

Janine Antoni, Ida Applebroog, Charles Atlas, Matthew Barney, Sadie Benning, Camille Billops and James Hatch, Roddy Bogawa, Chris Burden, Peter Cain, Sophie Calle and Greg Shepard, Peter Campus, Christine Choy, Shu Lea Cheang, Maureen Connor, DANCENOISE, Julie Dash, Cheryl Dunye, Jimmie Durham, Jeanna C. Finley, Holly Fisher, Andrea Fraser, Kip Fulbeck, Miguel Gandert, Ernie Gehr, Robert Gober, Nan Goldin, Marga Gomez, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Renee Green, Michael Joaquin Grey and Randolph Hall, Gulf Crisis TV Project, Barbara Hammer, Gary Hill, George Holliday, William Jones, Mike Kelley, John Kelly, Karen Kilimnik, Byron Kim, Elizabeth LeCompte/The Wooster Group, Spike Lee, Zoe Leonard, Liane & Macdonald, Simon Lewis, Glenn Ligon, James Luna, Daniel Martinez, Robbie McCauley, Suzanne McClelland, Donald Moffett, Christopher Mooch, Not Channel Zero, Pepon Osorio, Raymond Pettibon, Jack Pierson, Lari Pittman, Lourdes Portillo, Mark Rappaport, Charles Ray, Jonathan Robinson, Alison Saar, Allan Sekula, Peter Sellars, Cindy Sherman, Gary Simmons, Lorna Simpson, Kiki Smith, Nancy Spero, Janice Tanaka, Julia Taymor, Francesc Torres, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Willie Varela, Bill Viola, Marc Wellman, Marco Williams, Pat Ward Williams, Sue Williams, Fred Wilson, Kevin Wolff, Bruce Yonemoto, Norman Yonemoto, Timothy Martin

EXHIBITION CATALOG

1993 Biennial Exhibition. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and Harry Abrams, 1993. With essays by Elisabeth Sussman, Thelma Golden, John G. Hanhardt, Lisa Phillips, Homi K. Bhabha, Coco Fusco, B. Ruby Rich, and Avital Ronell.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists and groups: ca 89
Number of works: ca 150
Total attendance: unknown

Largely reviled at the time, the 1993 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitey Museum of American Art has come to be considered among the most important of all Whitney biennials. This is not only due to its specific content, but because it focused on particular subject matter rather than presenting an overview of contemporary practice. Overseen by a single curator, the 1993 exhibition departed from the survey-like character of past Whitney biennials to center on political work done by artists from marginalized groups.

Begun as an annual exhibition in 1932, since 1973 the show was held biennially to display highlights of American art created in the previous two years. Regularly an object of sectarian criticism, through the 1980s the Biennial was condemned specifically as a reprise of what had been shown in New York commercial galleries. For the 1980s was a period of growing diversity in artistic production, with artists of color along with gay, lesbian and feminist artists creating work around issues of race and gender. Such work, when shown at all, generally was exhibited in alternative spaces. The 1990 "Decade Show" collaboratively produced by the Studio Museum in Harlem, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art reviewed this "other 1980s." But it was the 1993 Whitney Biennial that brought such work before a mainstream audience.

This Biennial was the first conceived under the leadership of Whitney director David Ross. He gave charge of the show to curator Elisabeth Sussman, whom he had brought to the museum from the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, where he previously was director. While the exhibition was promoted as having a single curatorial voice, distinguishing this biennial from earlier group-organized efforts, Sussman in fact worked with a team of Whitney curators. In a departure from past practice, every member of the curatorial team wrote a catalog essay.

The exhibition contained work other than the politically charged pieces for which it is remembered. The first thing seen on approaching the museum was Charles Ray's toy fire engine enlarged to full size. But that playful impression disappeared with Pat Ward Williams's photograph in the window of black youths overwritten in red with the phrase "What you lookn at." The confrontational tone carried through the exhibition, as in Daniel Martinez's museum admission tags printed with all or part of the sentence "I cannot imagine ever wanting to be white." Such pieces prompted commentary about the show's hectoring character, and the explanatory labels were criticized as didactic and oversimplified, as was much of the work. Adding to critics' sense of being lectured at was a reading room stocked with theoretical texts, a now-familiar feature of exhibitions.

An object of virtually universal criticism was the amateur video of Los Angeles police beating the African American Rodney King, an event that sparked rioting after the officers were acquitted of charges. Much of the exhibition was constituted by video works, and for the first time the museum added galleries running continuous video programs. There also were a number of large installations that could be accommodated because many artists were represented by video pieces. A performance program was presented at the Whitney's Phillip Morris branch near Grand Central Station, where the museum had held performance events since the 1980s.

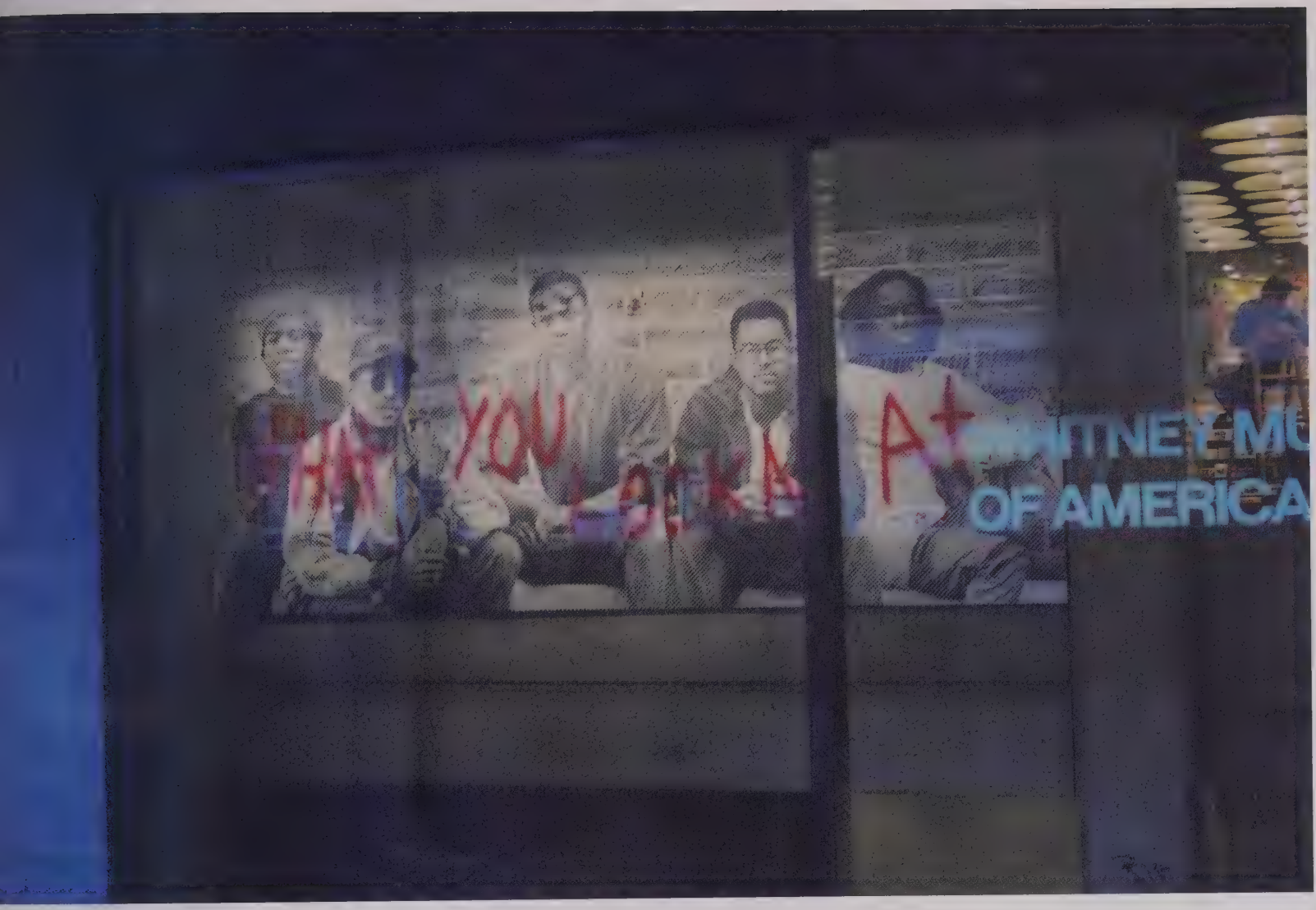
The pendulum swing that brought to the Whitney politically oriented work from the margins was to reverse with the next Biennial. On that occasion the Guerrilla Girls produced a poster entitled "Traditional Values and Quality Return to the Whitney Museum." Comparing racial and gender representation in the 1991, 1993, and 1995 Biennials, it shows the 1995 percentage of white male artists returning to the 1991 figure of around 60 percent after being reduced to 36 percent in 1993.

← Catalog cover for the 1993 Whitney Biennial Exhibition.

↓ Daniel J. Martinez appropriated the tags that gallery goers wear as proof of entry payment in his *Museum Tags: Second Movement (Overture) or Overture con Claque–Overture with Hired Audience Members.*

→ Pat Ward Williams's confrontational *What You Lookn At?* was installed at the entrance to the Whitney Museum of American Art. Entering the museum, visitors were also faced with a video by a non-artist—George Holliday's home video recording of the police beating of Rodney King in 1991, an event that helped spark riots in Los Angeles in 1992.

↘ On the street outside the Whitney Museum of American Art, Charles Ray displayed his massively oversize children's toy *Fire Truck*, scaled-up to the size of a real fire truck.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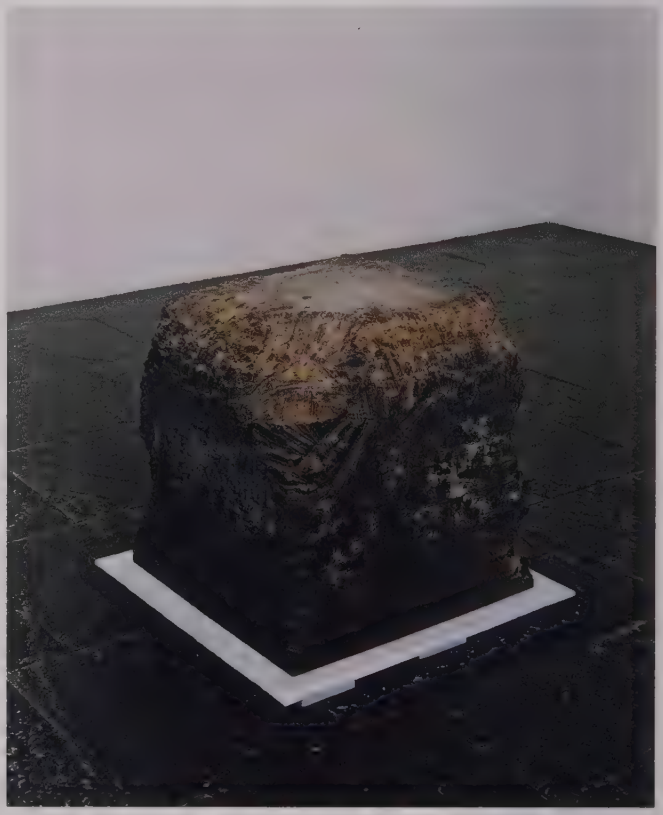
OF AMERICA

← Renée Green's *Import/Export Funk Office*, which traced a history of hiphop, and featured industrial shelves holding books that ranged from the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the 1960s to contemporary volumes on Afro-American studies.

↙ Janine Antoni's *Gnaw*, a vitrine display of heart-shape packages for chocolates, made from material removed from the sculpture *Chocolate Gnaw*. Also on view was *Lipslick*, lipstick made with pigment, beeswax, and chewed lard (removed from *Lard Gnaw*).

↓ Janine Antoni's *Chocolate Gnaw*.

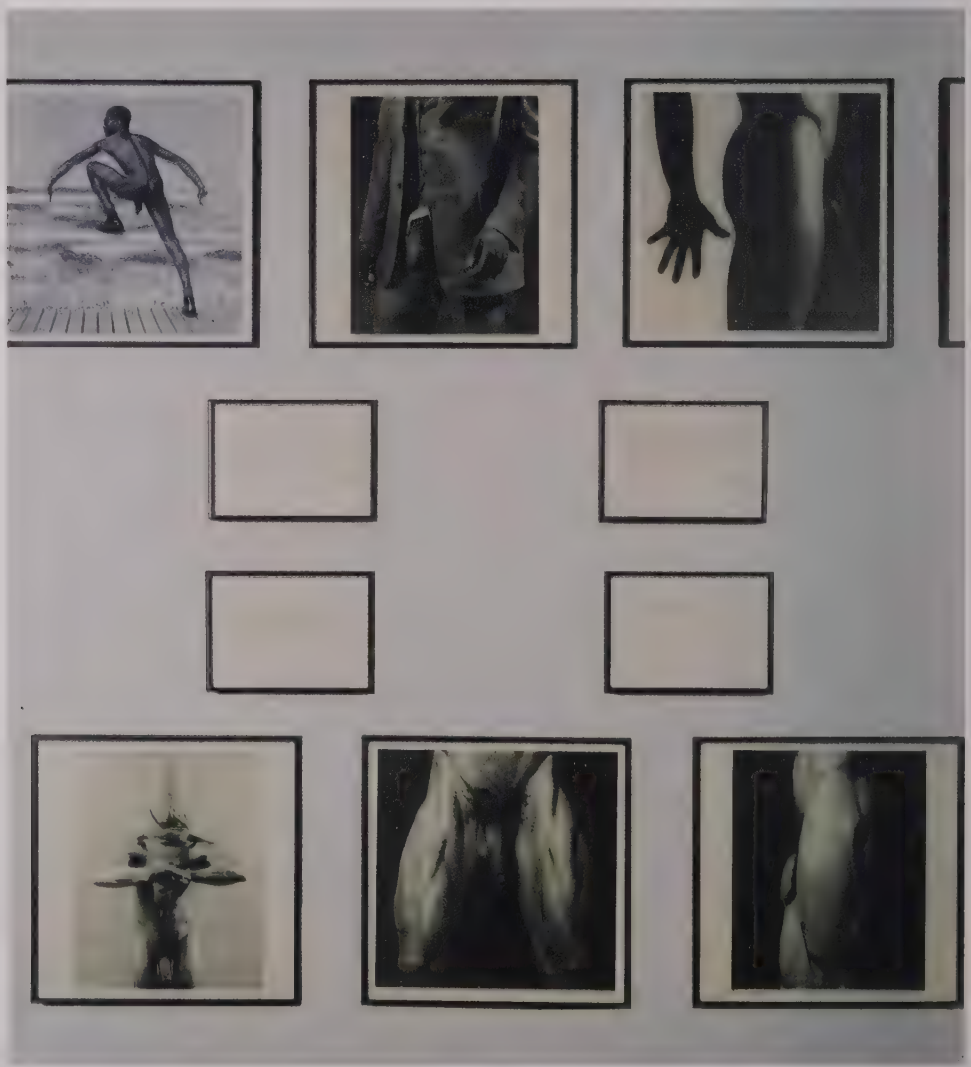


← Two works by Byron Kim. On the left wall are a series of skin-colored *Belly Paintings* made from melted crayon on linen; on the right is *Synecdoche*, consisting of 204 skin-colored panels.

↓ View of the exhibition showing, on the left wall, photographs by Nan Goldin; on the right wall is Ida Applebroog's *Jack F: Forced to Eat His Own Excrement, Kathy W: Is Told That if She Tells, Mommy Will Get Sick and Die;* on the floor are sixteen panels from the *Marginalia* series.

↑ Glenn Ligon's *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book*, a series of framed photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe, accompanied by text panels.

↗ Detail of Glenn Ligon's *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book*.



← Fred Wilson's *Re: Claiming Egypt*, a mini-museum of Egyptology designed to reveal the impulses behind colonialism and traditional museology. The installation included busts of Nefertiti and reproductions of Egyptian sculptures draped with contemporary T-shirts and necklaces; a room with an audio work; and a video loop showing snippets of popular Egyptology.

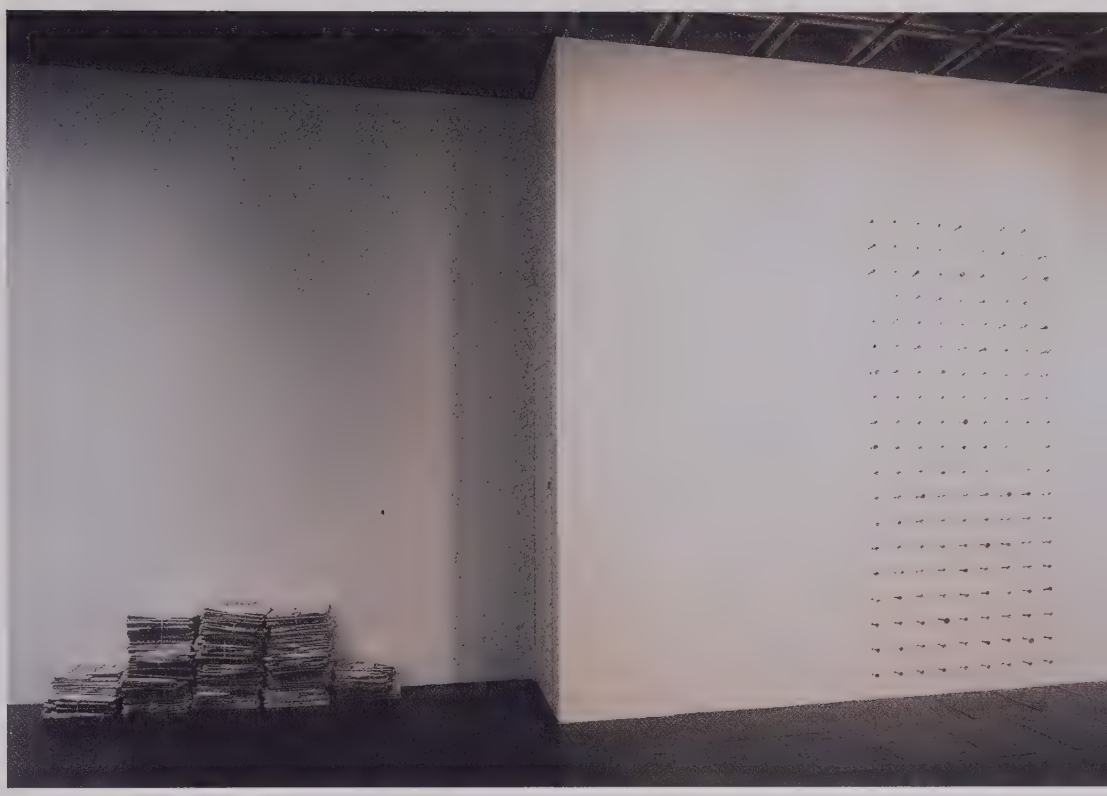
↓ Installation view showing an untitled collaborative work by Kiki Smith and David Wojnarowicz.

← Shu Lea Cheang's *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire*, a two-part installation that consisted of coin-machine operated TVs and telephones, which explored issues of sexuality and desire.

↙ Gallery view showing (left to right) Charles Ray's *Family Romance*, and Peter Cain's paintings *EP 110* and *Pathfinder*.

→ View of Robert Gober's *Newspaper* and Lorna Simpson's *Hypothetical?*, an installation that included photographs, texts, trumpet, mouthpieces, and audio. Gober's *Newspaper* consisted of editions of *The New York Times* that he had re-edited to tell the news from his own personal and political perspective. Among other changes, Gober inserted his own face into an advertisement for a wedding dress, with the caption "Having It All;" this was juxtaposed with an article entitled "Vatican Condones Discrimination Against Homosexuals."

↓ Installation view of Pepón Osorio's *The Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?)*.



COMING TOGETHER IN PARTS: POSITIVE POWER IN THE ART OF THE NINETIES

Elisabeth Sussman

1993 Biennial Exhibition (exh. cat.), 1993

A recent work by Robert Gober on exhibition in the "1993 Biennial" is an edition of bundles of newspapers. Stacked and tied for carrying out to the garbage recycling bins, these newspapers are actually fabricated. On their top pages, Gober intersperses real stories and photographs, culled from weeks and months of newspaper reading, with stories and images that he has created. These articles cover the usual combination of everyday banalities (ads for home cleansers) to more critical issues, such as environmental disasters and cutbacks in welfare. The leitmotif of the majority of the articles is the ongoing debate over the body and sexuality that has been at the center of our cultural struggles. Thus abortion, homosexuality, birth control, and references to the AIDS epidemic dominate the reporting. Among the most notable of the invented images is a photograph that shows Gober in a wedding dress captioned "Having it all." These newspapers have appeared in several exhibitions, most recently in an installation at the DIA Center for the Arts, New York. They can be succinctly described as allegorical representations of life and death, with the newspapers functioning as signifiers of community, of the public, and of the everyday; fashioned as they are to highlight content related to the artist's political concerns, the newspapers became political statements of identity. But Gober addressed this identity within a collective context, within a larger vision of the social.

I consider Gober's newspapers paradigmatic of the 1990s. For although sexual, ethnic, and gendered subjects motivate the content of recent art, these identities fragment but do not destroy the social fabric. Paradoxically, identities declare communities and produce a decentered whole that may have to be described as a community of communities. Hence the Gober newspapers are also a record (its meaning constructed) of the everyday: of the communities and the individuals that make up those communities, the economic, environmental, and political struggles of our time. The Gober work is a signature piece for the early 1990s, for it is an attempt to present a specific point of view, in a form that represents a traditional aspect of collective life, and it is precisely this representation of a refigured but fragmented collectivity that has been lacking in current art production and that this exhibition attempts to present.

I am not using collectivity in the sense of a sociopolitical organization alone. I do not mean to characterize the art of the last two years by sociological analysis, but to recognize that art production springs up from a relation of cultures and identities (in the plural). It is their rich interrelations that make up the social reality that underlies the art of this Biennial.

Looking at art in terms of such things as class, gender, or nation runs a risky course. Such artwork is most often regarded by the art world as propaganda or agitprop. But the art in the Biennial, like all art related to the important issues of our time—our identities, allegiances, environment, relationship to technology—must be considered with three important criteria in mind. First of all, despite a widespread belief to the contrary, art committed to ideas is not lacking in what are thought of as the traditional aesthetic qualities, for instance, sensuality, contradiction, visual pleasure, humor, ambiguity, desire, or metaphor. Second, works of art that are related to particular cultural positions are not unchanging. We must not fall into easy essentialist definitions or ideas of groups that are monolithically united. Identities, ethnicities, nationalisms, or technologies must also be described as at times shifting, and, like culture, must be conceived of as always being in a state of process or conflict, or what Homi Bhabha calls "negotiation." The concept of a border that encircles, binds in, and can be crossed is useful here. Feminism, for instance, is a viable identity term only if, as Judith Butler says, it "presupposes that 'women' designates an undesignatable field of differences, one that cannot be totalized or summarized by a descriptive identity category," and "that becomes a site of permanent openness and resignifiability." Similarly, nature cannot be easily defined as our more sophisticated world of technology creates infinite possibilities. "Either one adopts a sort of veneration before the immensity of 'that which is' or one accepts the possibility of manipulation."

The third criterion for viewing the art in this Biennial is a willingness to redefine the art world in more realistic terms—not as a seamless, homogeneous entity but as a collectivity of cultures involved in a process of exchange and difference. This process is embedded, for instance, in the irony of Mike Kelley's Biennial work: cheap banners made from signs found around college campuses for the groups—gays, straight women, black power, male heterosexuals—vying for the allegiance of the malleable pre-ideological American adolescent.

Finally, two other generalizations characterize the artists of this Biennial. First, they realize their ideas along a spectrum that runs from a direct engagement with the material thing or situation to a more conceptual engagement through replica, history, memory, and technology. Second, as the discussions of artists' works will indicate, a major synthesis of interest that has fully emerged in the early 1990s is the body. This is, indeed, a collective subject, approached by many artists and critics in different ways and with many different suppositions of what constitutes or is part of the physical (including sex and gender) and social (including psychological) body. It is the interplay of these elements that describes the art of the early 1990s. [...]

WHAT'S WHITE?

Thelma Golden

1993 Biennial Exhibition (exh. cat.), 1993

A current commercial for a popular brand of beer poses the question "What's Hot?" The question is flashed across the screen in huge block letters and then jump cuts with scenes of what its makers consider hot. The fast-paced visual images include a group of

sweating iced cans of the beer in question. Through its juxtaposition of image and text, the commercial answers its own question—this beer is hot.

The viewer is left to equate the images shown with hotness. Objects of desire are simply displayed, the beer becomes one of these objects; the elusive (hotness is really "coolness") is attainable if you drink this brand of beer. Hot is heterosexual male desire, water sports, and a good cold beer.

If only all of life's burning questions were so easily answered or as blatantly asked. This moment in con temporary culture cries out for resolution of another pressing question—"What's White?" If Madison Avenue were to answer this question with a similar commercial, it would be hard to find visual images. This is because "whiteness" is a signifier of power. The meaning of whiteness actually encompasses very few people, including many who consider themselves white. So this commercial would have to encompass images that acknowledge whiteness as an embodiment of power. Perhaps George Bush, Bill Clinton (better yet, Al Gore), and Wayne and His World? The harder you ask this question, the more possible definitions come to mind. Madonna? No. Clarence Thomas? Maybe. Jeffrey Dahmer? Notions of blackness (and the varying permutations of otherness) have been constructed and deconstructed *ad nauseam*. Popular culture often gives us poles for quantifying blackness. X is the most current definition; it doesn't get much blacker than Malcolm.

This discussion is not simply about race, but about relations to power. Race is about legal classification and when pragmatically deconstructed, according to cultural critic Lisa Jones, is really about hair texture. Easier, however, to discuss is what is not white, the realm referred to as difference. Difference, in the words of Cornel West, concerns itself with issues of "exterminism, empire, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, nation, nature, region ... " Yet difference is still positioned as different from whiteness, which, as we enter this discourse, is almost impossible to define. Much of the work in this exhibition concerns itself with what West further describes as the "new cultural politics of difference," whose "distinctive features ... are to trash the monolithic and homogeneous in the name of diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity; to reject the abstract, general and universal in light of the concrete, specific and particular; and to historicize, contextualize and pluralize by highlighting the contingent, provisional, variable, tentative, shifting, and changing."[1]

Many of the artists in the 1993 Biennial Exhibition work consciously to deconstruct and de-center the politically constructed site of whiteness and its relation to the ever-changing definition of Americanness. The strategies they use to enter this discourse differ greatly. The body provides an immediate site for discussions of cultural, gender, class, and sexual specificity. It allows traditional practice to be infected with transgressive ideals. [...]

Daniel J. Martinez's project employs an existing element of the Museum. In addition to a new installation in the gallery, Martinez will use the Museum's admissions buttons to intervene into the notion (or fallacy) of whiteness. The multicolored buttons, familiar to museum-goers, are typically emblazoned with the identifying logo WMAA. Martinez has changed the text on the buttons to read "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white." The text is spread out over five buttons that only form the full sentence when they are brought together. Visitors will randomly receive the buttons, deciphering the complete meaning only when they become conscious of the buttons other visitors are wearing. Martinez is working with the notion that this statement has radically different connotations depending on the wearer's race and attitude toward race. The button is an affirmative declaration that reverses decades of negativism about all things not white. It also requires museum visitors to acknowledge the level of control inherent in museum practice and presentation and absolve themselves of some of the privilege of cultural imperialism. Because the buttons are required for admission, visitors have little choice in determining their position in relation to Martinez's intervention. Such subversion of individual choice and institutional objectivity determines Martinez's art making.

Everyone has "identity"—if we acknowledge that the state of whiteness is a definitive category as different (or as specific) as those we label "other." Artists in the 1990s have begun to fully deconstruct the marginality-centrality paradigm. Marginality, in effect, becomes the norm while the center is increasingly undefinable and perhaps irrelevant. Although many may call this Biennial the "multicultural" or "politically correct" Biennial, it should be read as a larger project that insists that decentralization and the embracing of the margins have become dominant. Indeed, margins, as they once existed, even seem inappropriate because they indicate a hierarchical relation that belies the importance of their position in relation to the center. "Boundaries," used to describe this condition by theorist Homi Bhabha, seems more applicable. The word boundaries suggests the self-induced yet unfixed definitions that insinuate the multilevel associations which give communities breadth as well as specificity. One is not simply African American, Native American, Hispanic American, Euro American or Asian American, but also male or female, straight or gay, rich or poor, urban or rural. This exhibition acknowledges the varied personal and aesthetic strategies that inform this unfolding dialogue, this creation of a narrative which acknowledges the postnational, post-essential identity.

1. Cornel West, "The New Cultural Policies of Difference," in Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West, eds., Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures *(New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990), p. 19.*

SCRAWLING IN THE MARGINS. NEW YORK'S WHITNEY BIENNIAL SPITS IN THE FACE OF CONVENTION

Paul Richard

The Washington Post, 4 March 1993

The 1993 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art is bound to be remembered as the in-your-face Biennial. Its single theme is Victim Chic. Its message

is insistently, trendily political. Its artists—there are eighty-two—all feel themselves aggrieved. And, here they come in noisy droves, those martyrs of the margin, the lesbians, the gays, the inhabitants of barrios, the sufferers from AIDS. Their exhibition snarls. Among the first works encountered here—you can see it from the street—is a large-as-life photograph (by Pat Ward Williams) of five unsmiling homeboys staring at the viewer. A challenge writ in spray paint has been scrawled across their bodies: "What you lookn at," it growls. The exhibition ends—some 250 objects later—with a room-size installation that offers this advice in cutout letters 2 feet [60 centimeters] high: "In the rich man's house the only place to spit is in his face."

The rich man's house in question is, of course, the Whitney, the Upper East Side art museum that has been mounting these Biennials since 1932. Founded by Gloria Vanderbilt Whitney, whose name sings with Manhattan wealth, it's run by rich folk still. Its chairman is Flora Miller Biddle, its president is Leonard A. Lauder, and A. Alfred Taubman is one of its trustees. This anger-spilling show makes them all seem like masochists. Not since Leonard Bernstein entertained the Panthers have New York's culturati invited such abuse.

Most of them would tell you that they're deeply fond of paintings. But these artists sneer at paintings. Photography is easier. In the present exhibition, the approximately two hundred photographs outnumber the canvases more than ten to one. And most of the trustees bear the curse of "whiteness," a quality the catalog describes as "a signifier of power," and hence a badge of shame.

When you enter the Whitney—admission is $6—you are handed a small button to prove that you have paid. For the Biennial, a special button has been designed by Daniel J. Martinez, a Chicano artist from Los Angeles. The button—which, according to the catalog, "requires museum visitors to absolve themselves of some of the privilege of cultural imperialism"—says: "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white."

No wonder New York wags are already calling the Whitney the Whitey Museum of American Art. White is bad, we're told here, or utterly uninteresting. So is heterosexuality, and middle-class prosperity. What counts is "marginality." That's the message of this show. [...]

AT THE WHITNEY, A BIENNIAL WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Roberta Smith

The New York Times, 5 March 1993

The 1993 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art begins on Madison Avenue in front of the building, where an enormous sculpture of a fire engine by the California artist Charles Ray is parked at the curb. Sleekly red, it is also hugely cute, because its skewed proportions and simplified details are those of a child's toy that has been blown up to adult real-life scale. Enjoy it. There's not a lot of eyes-on pleasure to be had inside, where the latest Biennial turns its back on the razzle-dazzle of the 1980s and faces the harsher realities of the 1990s.

The first Biennial to be completely organized during the tenure of David A. Ross, the museum's director, the '93 version is a pious, often arid show that frequently substitutes didactic moralizing for genuine visual communication. It could easily be subtitled "The Importance of Being Earnest." It could also be called the "Reading While Standing Up Biennial": the art is often heavy with text, even without the simplistic artists' statements featured on many labels and the reading room, where one can peruse the latest books of cultural and sociopolitical theory.

Nonetheless, this Biennial is a watershed. In some ways it is actually a better show than usual, simply because it sticks its neck out. For one thing, this is the first Biennial to be selected mostly by one person and less by committee. Elisabeth Sussman, a curator who worked for Mr. Ross at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, seems to have had the final say about the show, although Lisa Phillips, John G. Hanhardt and Thelma Golden, other Whitney curators, also worked on it. Instead of a frequently docile presentation of market trends, like so many of its predecessors, this show takes a distinct position. It focuses on a range of art that is more or less political—or at least social—paying scant attention to anything else.

Installation art, sculpture and late-century Conceptualism claim the front lines here, with painting far to the rear. The artists represent a savvy mix of mainstream and marginal, and confrontation fills the air. After Mr. Ray's fire truck, the next thing you'll see, suspended above the Whitney's restaurant, is Pat Ward Williams's photomural of five stern black youths, scrawled with angry red graffiti saying "What you lookn at."

With its persistent references to race, class, gender, sexuality, the AIDS crisis, imperialism, and poverty, the work on view touches on many of the most pressing problems facing the country at the dawn of the Clinton Administration and tries to show how artists are grappling with them. The wall labels and texts are rife with fashionable buzzwords: identity, difference, otherness. Anita Hill, the Persian Gulf War and the violence that followed the Rodney G. King verdict flash before the eye, usually on video. In fact, the exhibition makes a video artist of George Holliday, the man who was using his camcorder for the first time and happened to videotape the Los Angeles police beating Mr. King, spontaneously creating a document, if not an artwork, that once more brought the issue of racism to every American living room.

The presence of Mr. Holliday's tape signals one of the show's basic flaws, which is that it is less about the art of our time than about the times themselves.

But in opting for a clear-cut theme, Mr. Ross and his curators get credit for breaking the Biennial mold and demonstrating that this mainstay of the contemporary art scene can be radically changed, rather than simply adjusted year to year. Their decision will look even better if other esthetic approaches receive equal time in future Biennials.

The Ross Whitney also gets credit for mounting one of the most ethnically diverse, generously installed shows in Biennial history.

Spacious to the point of luxury, this show spreads the work of only eighty-two artists (nearly half of whom work in film or videotape), throughout the five-story building so that several participants have entire galleries to themselves. More important and perhaps in keeping with the new administration, this is an inclusive Biennial that emphatically reflects the country's diversity by including unusually large numbers of nonwhite artists, artists whose work is openly gay, and women.

AT THE WHITNEY, SOUND, FURY AND LITTLE ELSE

Michael Kimmelman
The New York Times, 25 April 1993

The Whitney Biennial has not spontaneously brought about world peace and racial harmony, as it seems hell-bent on proving it can do, but it has accomplished one minor diplomatic coup. It has brought various New York critics of usually discordant opinions into rare harmony: at the least, they dislike it.

I hate the show. I had hoped, after some weeks had passed and the smoke had cleared, to discover gems left in the rubble. But it turns out I became increasingly depressed by the exhibition, partly because the few good works in it—those of Cindy Sherman, Nan Goldin, Janine Antoni, Kiki Smith, Ida Applebroog, Gary Hill, and some others are so diminished by the grim circumstances in which they have been placed.

There's virtually no sensitivity to art that demands a certain silence and space around it, art that aspires to something more than political sloganeering and self-indulgent self-expression. One is supposed to credit the Whitney for doing with this Biennial what has been prescribed in the past: replacing the old selection-by-committee process with a single curator, in this case Elisabeth Sussman, who has veto power over the committee. The goal was to provide a more focused exhibition as well as one harder to identify with (read: blame on) the whole institution.

The show, which includes works by eighty-two artists, is certainly more focused—but focused in that it consists almost entirely of art that addresses political and social issues, not in the more important sense that it discriminates in its judgment. Ms. Sussman has apparently concluded that discrimination sounds suspiciously elitist. [...]

FADE FROM WHITE

Peter Plagens
Newsweek, 14 March 1993

The Royal Academy in Paris sponsored the old official salons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where artists who wanted to get ahead contributed lots of heavily framed oil paintings and smooth bronze sculptures celebrating glorious moments in European history. New York's Whitney Museum of American Art sponsors the new, quasi-official salons called biennial exhibitions. The 1993 edition is on view through 13 June. It contains lots of film, video, performance and installation art (that is, mixed-media environments built to fit the site) protesting sordid inequities in the American present. Although the eighty-two artists in the Biennial care to the point of apoplexy about what the museum calls "such dominant current issues as class, race, gender, sexuality, and the family," they also fill the bill of artist-as-victim increasingly demanded by the contemporary art scene. Shu Lea Cheang's *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire*, for example (a video installation about lesbian eroticism within racial minorities within a hostile America), is as orthodox these days as, say, Ingres's stilted neoclassical painting *Antiochus and Stratonice* was back in 1840.

The old salons were stuffy and dull but boasted the occasional masterpiece. This newest salon sports the occasional witty work (like Janine Antoni's airlessly glitzy mock boutique of lipstick and chocolate, *Gnaw*) but is mostly preachy and glum. At the reception counter, the customary admission buttons have been replaced by ones bearing fragments of "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white" from Daniel J. Martinez's conceptual art work, *Museum Tags*. In a video room, George Holliday's incendiary tape of the Rodney King beating (dubbed a work of art by the Biennial) and Lourdes Portillo's *Columbus on Trial* play regularly.

Out in the galleries, Sue Williams's autobiographical sculpture of a woman, *Irresistible*, cringes in fetal position trying to ward off sudden kicks to the face delivered by an unseen male "sweetheart." While Charles Atlas's stupefyingly bloody short film *Son of Sam and Delilah* may at first seem as silly as Monty Python's old garden-party parody of Sam Peckinpah movies, curator John Hanhardt says in the show's mildly inflammatory catalog that it's really "a metaphor for the assault—whether physical or attitudinal—against homosexuals in this time of the AIDS crisis." Lest there be any doubt that the show's primary scoldee is the Whitney's largely straight white audience itself, fellow curator Thelma Golden confirms in her essay "What's White ... ?" that many of the Biennial artists "work consciously to deconstruct and de-center the politically constructed site of whiteness and its relation to the ever-changing definition of Americanness." She means the worm has turned.

If your heart resides in one of the show's amen corners, you can woof with abandon. If not, it's best to get a little perspective before hollering reverse discrimination. The Biennial has always sent people in the art world into tizzies, usually because they, or artists they represent, don't get in. The difference now is that the 1993 Biennial has replaced the perfumy scent of art-dealer alliances with the cordite aroma of cultural reparations: fewer overprivileged spokespersons on behalf of the underprivileged, almost no hot properties from the finer Soho emporiums, and no token fogies like Roy Lichtenstein and Cy Twombly in 1991. This Biennial is as close as a museum can get to a Salon of the Other without becoming an outsider art festival.

Shortly after Pat Rileyesque director David Ross (personable, energetic, well tailored) arrived in 1991, he brought in Elisabeth Sussman, his curator for five years at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. Ross, forty-three, gave her veto power over the work in the previously picked-by-committee Biennial. Sussman, fifty, has made the 1993 Biennial even more thorny and fractious.

"This Rodney King thing bothered me," she says. "The Hill–Thomas thing bothered me [...] The last two years felt that kind of way to me." [...]

All of which doesn't help the current Biennial, which ends up more a dyspeptically sad show than a radically feisty one. It's a melange of social complaints that sometimes takes on the tone of the *New York Post* edited by the Guerrilla Girls. If merely displaying and asserting were the equivalent of examining and arguing, Fred Wilson's draping replicas of old Egyptian statuary with African beads, in his *Re: Claiming Egypt* installation, might better convince us that Western culture was born black. Sometimes the Biennial is simply academically dense. If embellishing prosaic texts with tritely arty color photographs were the equal of a galvanizing Goyaesque image, Allan Sekula's wall essay on cargo ports, "Fish Story," wouldn't feel like a sociology field trip on a drizzly day. What this Biennial needs is a few dissenting works. Without them, the show isn't real discourse, just self-congratulation. And that, career considerations aside, is the essence of a salon.

BACKLASH

Dan Cameron
Artforum, May 1993

Until the 1993 Whitney Biennial, I used to hope—and maybe, I'll admit, even take it for granted once in a while—that my work was contributing to a process of progressive cultural transformation, and, therefore, to the public good. Now the verdict has come down that, as a white male dealing in artistic matters not always emphatically political, I'm actually part of the problem. Unfortunately, once I manage to assimilate this information and am on my way to becoming a better person, I'll probably still be convinced that the '93 Biennial was a pretty awful show.

This is the quandary: Can an exhibition offer this kind of jolt to one's sense of identity, yet still never get off the ground? In reply, I'll offer not just an affirmative, but also an explanation that collapses both conscious and unconscious motives in the part of the show's chief authors. Everyone is by now aware of the Biennial's overt sociocultural agenda, and much has been made of the fact that Elisabeth Sussman and Thelma Golden seem to share a personal hatred of anything that might provoke an outbreak of guilt-free pleasure. But what hasn't been discussed is how these two operations are linked in a profound and even disturbing way. The fact is that under the guise of egalitarianism, we are being asked not merely to bend a little or even a lot where our standards of formal articulation and conceptual rigor are concerned for the sake of having our world views expanded. Instead, we are now being pushed to declare that any overt preoccupations with aesthetic principles represent an evasion of the artist's social contract. Unfortunately, much as I might like lightheartedly to enjoy the fact that I don't like this show, mediocrity has formed part of my personal hell for far too long to forget that good intentions are invariably the most dangerous motives of all.

Ultimately, it is out of respect for the Whitney's high-minded efforts that I feel compelled to register such a negative opinion of the show itself. If proof were needed that politics and beauty are the latest entry in the art world's litany of false dichotomies (abstract vs. representational, modern vs. progressive), it is needed no more. I may be happy about many of the changes in the Biennial's overall structure, but that doesn't mean that substituting feel-good liberalism for big-gallery clout is going to satisfy anyone's craving for cultural diversity, at least not for long. Come to think of it, where do I sign up for the backlash?

SAME DIFFERENCE

Thomas McEvilley
Artforum, May 1993

Up front, and in brief, I am friendly and favorable toward the current Whitney Biennial, both the curation and the work. This year's show, as everyone knows by now, has turned away from the survey idea to provide a more intensive inspection of a single theme that the curators and director seem to feel deserves this special attention because of its comparative neglect in the past. The theme in question is, of course, politically motivated art emphasizing ethnic, cultural, and gender differences. I'm not interested in second-guessing the curators about precisely which artists or pieces they should have shown. Suffice it to say that most of it strikes me as serious and focused work that deserves to be leveraged into mainstream awareness. It is significant that, in the midst of the "culture wars" that began with right-wing attacks on the NEA in the late 1980s, a major museum has weighed in and come out swinging on behalf of these socially motivated efforts.

The Biennial is clearly an attempt to implement the notion that the museum should be used as a social instrument, and in this respect it is both determinedly postmodern and more ideologically self-conscious than "Magiciens de la Terre," and perhaps even than the "Decade Show." Indeed, it is the fact that it has refocused a discussion that is at least ten years old, bringing many of the repressed ideological dispositions embedded in the rhetoric of previous efforts into the foreground, that distinguishes this Biennial, rather than its being particularly up to date. To me the most conspicuous problem is the puritanism of the show. Postmodernism is postpuritanism—accepting impure and conflated modes as truer to life than puritanical ones. It is a doublespeak (or double code, as Charles Jencks calls it), not a single-minded obsession with one idea to the exclusion of all others. But in this Biennial we encounter only a single voice, a single code. Ironically, in an exhibition devoted to the theme of difference, there is no difference, just the same rhetoric of difference repeated again and again as another unitary position.

The problem is that a statement so single-mindedly conceived lacks dialectical resonance. It fails to sublate itself, or to rise to a higher plane by incorporating the antithesis. By being somewhat sophomorically provocative, confrontational, and strident, this show seems to preach to the converted, and runs the risk of provoking the unconverted to renewed hostility rather than attempting to sway them through argument and dialogue.

22

EXHIBITION

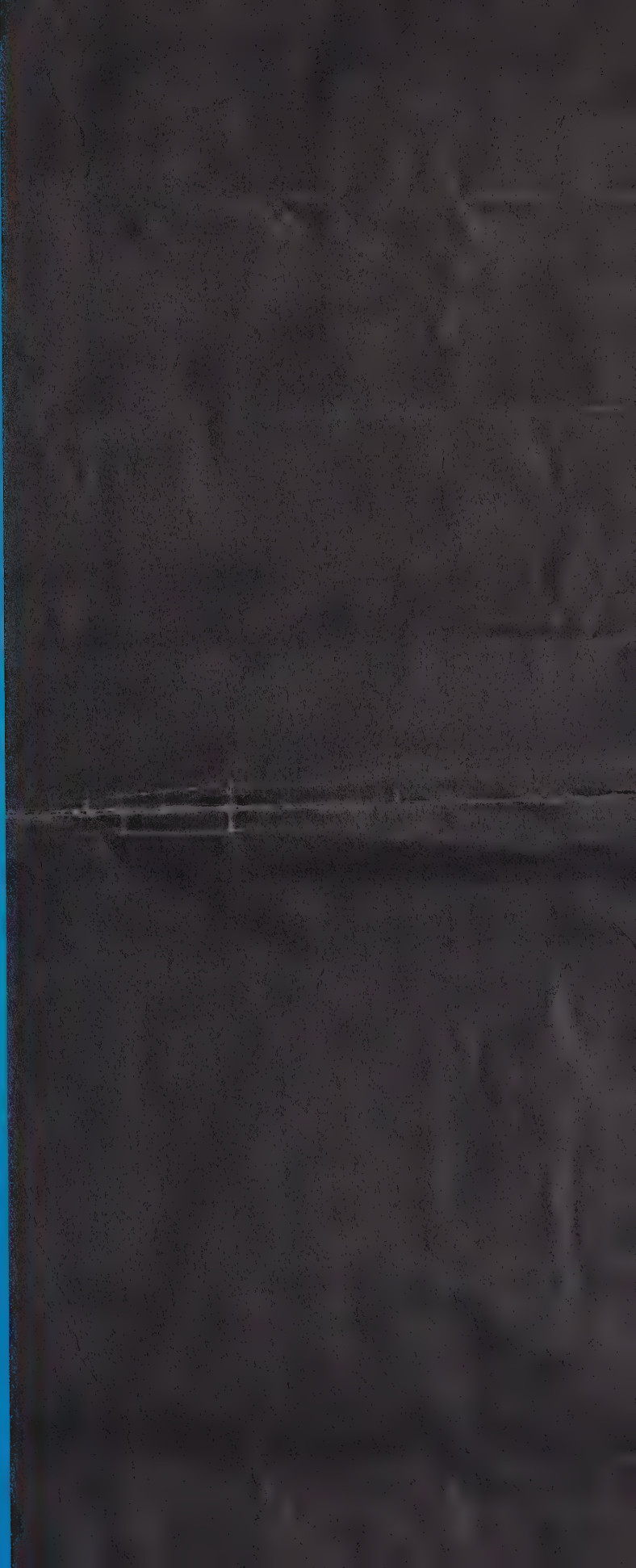
Traffic

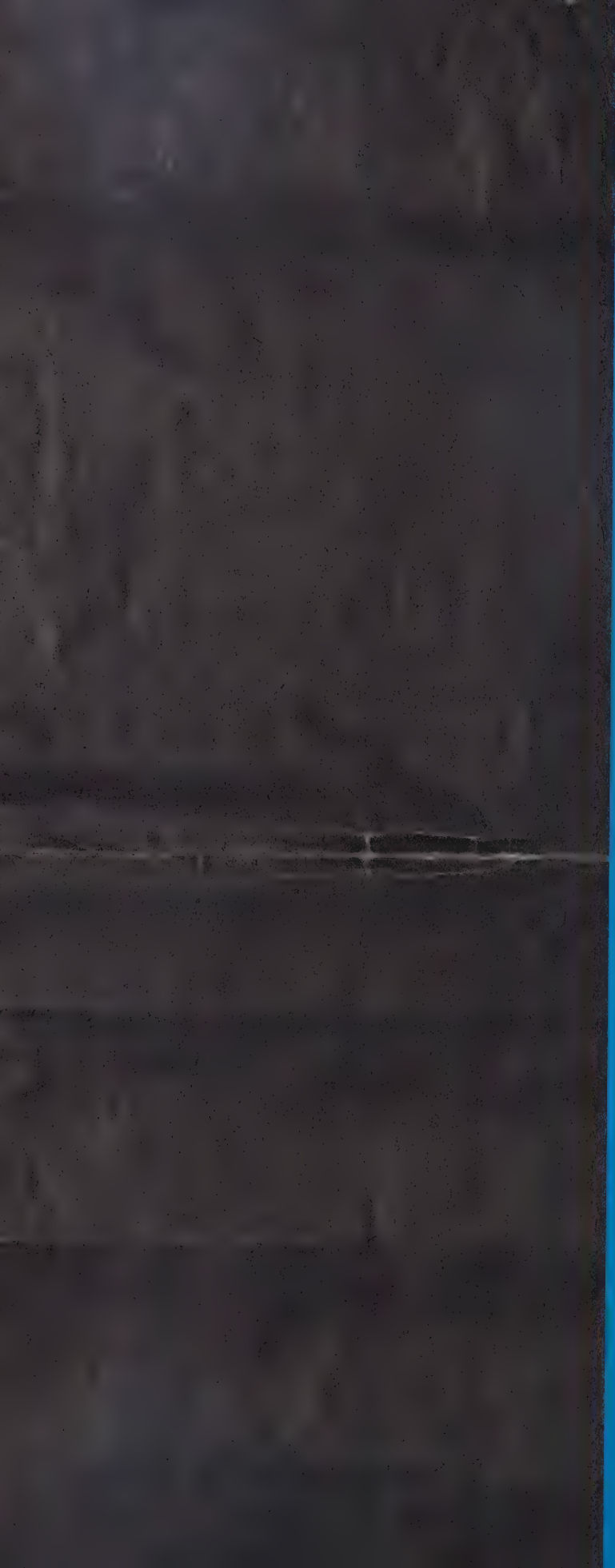
LOCATION

CAPC
Musée d'Art
Contemporain
de Bordeaux

DATE

26 January–
24 March 1996





CURATOR
Nicolas Bourriaud

ITINERARY
None

ARTISTS
Vanessa Beecroft, Henry Bond, Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, Angelu Bulloch, Maurizio Cattelan, Andrea Clavadetscher and Eric Schumacher, Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Douglas Gordon, Jens Haaning, Lothar Hempel, Christine Hill, Noritoshi Hirakawa, Carsten Höller, Pierre Huyghe, Peter Land, Mihas Manatas, Honoré d'O, Gabriel Orozco, Jorge Pardo, Philippe Parreno, Jason Rhoades, Christopher Speranza and Simon Grennan, Wolfgang Tillmans, Rirkit Tiravanija, Xavier Veilhan, Gillian Wearing, Kenji Yanobe

CATALOG
Traffic. Bordeaux: CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 1996. With an essay by Nicolas Bourriaud and texts by artists.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Number of artists: 37
Number of works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

"Traffic" issued from a body of art and exhibition making produced primarily in Europe during the first half of the 1990s. It also provided the occasion for critic Nicolas Bourriaud, the show's curator, to formulate a theoretical structure for this activity under the rubric of "relational aesthetics." Although participants in the exhibition engaged in diverse practices, Bourriaud's account of their work in terms of interpersonal relations and structures of sociability has come to frame the art of that decade.

The exhibition was held in the CAPC Museum of Contemporary Art of Bordeaux. One of France's most important contemporary exhibition venues, it was known for dramatic shows of major artists displayed in a massive nineteenth-century warehouse renovated for the purpose. The most visible part of "Traffic" was set in this grand space. But the exhibition included artists' projects outside the museum, such as the broadcasting of jokes in Arabic in the stately city center. This made insiders out of Arab outsiders, and outsiders out of French insiders, in a work that typifies Bourriaud's characterization of "relational" art. For such pieces, the intention was not to create a static object but to initiate and operate within a situation of human connection. In "Traffic," artists provided seating areas and a fireplace as open settings for this. More structured participatory situations were created as well, such as taking people on a bus ride through Bordeaux or having visitors discuss and draw the floor plans of their childhood homes. And there was much humor, from a television channel directed at a single person (an astronaut) to an installation of teddy bears watching a video of their own production.

The emphasis on situations and interpersonal experience was incorporated in the exhibition process itself, which involved the artists staying in Bordeaux for an extended period before the show. Of course, something like this had been common since the late 1960s, when artists began to spend time together while making work on-site for large exhibitions. But with "Traffic," this period of working and socializing was conceived as part of the exhibition, which like the works within it essentially involved participation and process. The model had been developed in 1991 by "No Man's Time" at the National Center of Contemporary Art-Villa Arson in Nice, curated by Eric Troncy, where artists had spent a month together preparing the show. The concept of exhibitions as occasions for convivial interaction would be taken to the extreme in 1999 at the faux 6th Caribbean Biennial, curated by Maurizio Cattelan and Jens Hoffmann, which consisted of the artists and organizers hanging out together on the island of St. Kitts. Among those associated with "relational aesthetics," exhibitions were another kind of "relational" project.

The multi-day opening was filled with events, including participatory activities for the public, film screenings, talks, and panel discussions, and of course a party. Coinciding with "Traffic," the museum mounted an exhibition of videos and installations by Matthew Barney, and the opening program featured screenings of Cremaster 1 and Cremaster 4. A third show presented new museum acquisitions including work by Andrea Zittel, an artist whom Bourriaud had invited to participate in "Traffic."

Filling the immense nave of the renovated warehouse with a haphazard array of freestanding rooms, strange objects, and performances, and extending out into the community, "Traffic" of course was the principal exhibition. Nicolas Bourriaud highlighted for an international audience this new variety of art making by assembling these artists who had worked and exhibited together in a range of venues, artists who had formed a network of friendship and collaboration. And by providing a compelling theoretical framework for its discussion, he situated "relational" art as the central art of the 1990s.

↖ Catalog cover for the "Traffic" exhibition.

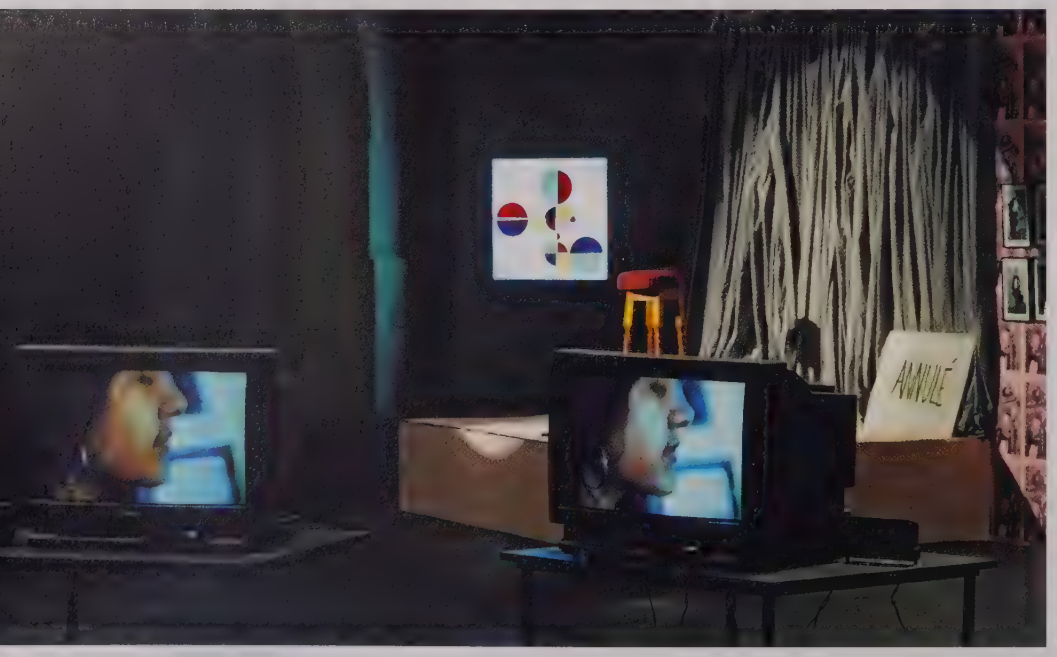
→ View of the exhibition, showing Maurizio Cattelan and Philippe Parenno's *La Dolce Utopia* (the yellow balloon), Carsten Höller's mobile structure (left), Xavier Veilhan's *The Fire* (black pipe and fireplace in the center, with audience on seating), and a floor piece by Jorg Pardo (right). In the background is a musical performance held during the four-day opening event.

↑ Gallery view showing (left to right) a floor-based work by Jorg Pardo; Maurizio Cattelan and Philippe Parenno's *La Dolce Utopia* (the yellow balloon); Carsten Höller's mobile structure and Xavier Veilhan's *The Fire* (behind pillar); a floor-based work by Liam Gillick; Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Séances biographiques;* and Lothar Hempel's work.

→ Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's *Alternative Society*. The piece contained a synthetic landscape with plaster huts, a small pond, and an area with tables, benches and kitchen equipment. The intention was that the artists would live in the installation for two weeks and that visitors would be able to meet them in their "Alternative Society" to discuss the implications of the piece as well as other alternative models of society.

↗↗ Showing (from left to right), Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's *Alternative Society;* Liam Gillick's floor-based work; Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Séances biographiques;* Jorg Pardo's floor-based work; Xavier Veilhan's *The Fire*. In the foreground is Lothar Hempel's work, which was produced with local social groups. Inside the space were the facades of anonymous apartment buildings; on the outside, Hempel displayed information from several of these local organizations.

→→ Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Untitled (Free Exchange Bar)*.

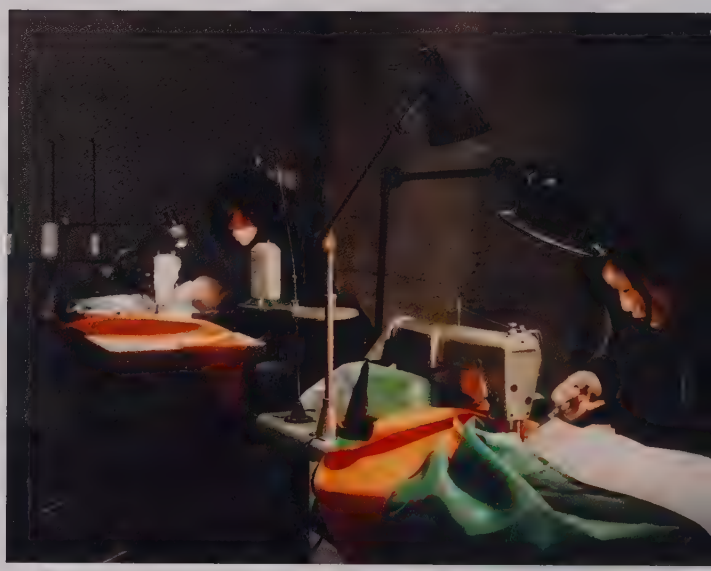


↑ Vanessa Beecroft's untitled performance (left) and installation of drawings (right) that relate to the artist's experience of anorexia.

← Henry Bond's *Workstation*, with Peter Land's *Pink Space*.

↗ Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Séances biographiques*, in which she held "séances," during which visitors collaborated with the artist to draw plans of their childhood home.

→ Christine Hill/ARTSLUT's *Baggage*.



↖↖ Kenji Yanobe's *Tanking Machine*, which was filled with a solution of sodium chloride heated to approximately body temperature, allowing users to float in a state of deprived sensory functions and enter a state of meditation.

↖ Jens Haaning's *Flag Production*, which was performed for the first week in the nave of the CAPC.

← One of Philippe Parreno and Maurizio Cattelan's TV shows. For CPC *Channel*, the artists imagined a television station that is oriented toward a single individual, an astronaut.

←← Pierre Huyghe's performance piece, *Singing in the Rain*, with Miltos Manetas's *Sad Tree* in the background.

↑ ↑ Noritoshi Hirakawa installed a telephone booth in an immigrant neighborhood in Bordeaux for the duration of the exhibition; the telephone was connected to one in the gallery.

↑ Philippe Parreno's *Werktische I und II (Made on the 1st of May)*. On 1 May 1995, Parreno invited friends and artists to participate in creating T-shirts for teddy bears. The teddies were a type that recorded children's voices so that they could be played back later; Parreno's teddies played back fragments of conversations and noise that had been taped inadvertently by the workers who had created them.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RELATIONAL AESTHETICS

Nicolas Bourriaud
Traffic (exh. cat.), 1996

Each one of the twenty-eight artists taking part in the "Traffic" exhibition has a whole world of forms, a set of problems, and a trajectory that are all peculiar to him or her. They are not linked together by any style, and even less so by any theme or iconography. What these artists do have in common, though, is more crucial, because they are working within the same practical and theoretical horizon—the realm of relationships between people. Their works highlight social methods of exchange, interactivity with the onlooker within the aesthetic experience proposed to him–her, and communication processes, in their tangible dimension as tools for linking human beings and groups to one another. So they are all working within what we might call the relational realm. They all pitch their artistic praxis in a proximity that, without belittling the visuality factor, relativizes its place in the exhibition's protocol. The work of art of the 1990s turns the onlooker into a neighbor and interlocutor. It is precisely the attitude of this generation towards communications that helps to define it in relation to previous generations. Most artists who emerged in the 1980s, from Richard Prince to Jeff Koons via Jenny Holzer, pinpointed the visual aspect of communication systems. Their successors, on the other hand, show a preference for contact and tactility. Possible sociological explanations for this phenomenon exist, given that the 1990s, marked as the decade has been by recession, hardly bode well for sensational and conspicuous undertakings. There are purely aesthetic reasons, too: the "hark back" pendulum stopped in the 1980s at the 1960s movements—Pop Art, mainly—whose visual effectiveness underpins most of the forms put forward by simulationism. For better or for worse, our period can be identified—right down to its recession "ambiance"—with the Arte Povera and the experimental art of the 1970s. This albeit superficial voguish trend helped to refocus attention on the works of artists like Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson, while the success of Mike Kelley recently encouraged a reinterpretation of Californian Junk Art, Paul Thek, and Tetsumi Kudo. Fashion creates aesthetic microclimates whose effects are felt even in our reading of recent history. To put it another way, the sieve arranges its mesh in different ways, and lets other types of works "sift through"—works that, in return, have an influence on the present. This said, we are dealing here with a group of artists that, for the first time since the emergence of Conceptual art in the mid-1960s, in no way seeks support from the reinterpretation of a past aesthetic movement. Relational art is not the revival of any movement, or the comeback of any style. It issues from an observation of the present and from thinking about the lot of artistic activity. Its basic assumption—the realm of human relations as a setting for the work—has no example to emulate in art history, even if, a posteriori, it may appear to be the obvious backdrop for all aesthetic praxis, as well as a modernist theme par excellence. All one has to do is simply reread the lecture given by Marcel Duchamp in 1954—"The Creative Process"—to be persuaded that interactivity is scarcely a novel idea. [...]

Novelty lies somewhere else. It resides in the fact that this generation of artists consider intersubjectivity and interaction neither as theoretical and faddish gadgets, nor as the auxiliaries (alibis) of a traditional art practice. This generation considers these things as both a springboard and a culmination—in a word, as the principal informers of its activity. The space in which their works are analyzed is altogether one of interaction, one of openness ushered in by any dialog (Georges Bataille would have written déchirure = "split"). What they produce are relational space-times—interhuman experiences that attempt to free themselves from the restrictions of the ideology of mass communications. In some ways, these are places where alternative forms of sociableness are formulated, along with critical models and moments of constructed conviviality.

It is nevertheless clear that the day of the New Man, the age of futurist manifestos, and the moment for summoning a better world all ready to move into, are all well and truly over. Nowadays, we live out our utopia on a subjective, day-to-day basis, in the real time of tangible and intentionally fragmentary experiments. The artwork is presented as a social interstice within which these experiments, and these new "possibilities of life," turn out to be feasible. It would seem more pressing, here and now, to invent possible relationships with our neighbors than to hold out for brighter tomorrows. That's all there is to it, but it's an awful lot. And, in any event, it represents an anticipated alternative to the depressing, authoritarian, and reactionary thinking that, in France at least, masquerades as art theory, variant: "common sense" regained. But modernity is not dead, if we recognize as modern a taste for aesthetic experience and for venturesome thinking, running counter to the overcautious orthodoxies championed by our piecework philosophers, by neo-traditionalists ("Beauty" according to the ineffable Dave Hickey), and by Jean Clair-like activists hooked on the past.

With all due respect to these fundamentalists, when it comes to yesterday's good taste, today's art is fairly and squarely taking on and taking up the legacy of the twentieth-century avant-gardes, while at the same time challenging their dogmatism and their teleology. And lest you should have doubts, this last sentence was much mulled over: it is quite simply time to write it down. For modernism was basking in an "imagination of opposition," to borrow the term coined by Gilbert Durand, which proceeded by way of separations and contrasts, readily disqualifying the past in favor of the future. It was based on conflict, whereas the imagination of the 1990s is concerned with negotiations, bonds and forms of coexistence. These days, people no longer try to progress by way of conflictual clashes, but rather by the invention of new combinations, possible relationships between distinct entities, and constructed alliances between different partners. Like social contracts,

aesthetic contracts are seen for what they are. No longer does anyone intend to establish the Golden Age on Earth, and people will be quite happy to create various modi vivendi encouraging more equitable social relations, fuller lifestyles, and fruitful combinations of existence of many kinds. Art, likewise, is not trying to represent utopias, but build concrete spaces. [...]

Because art is made of the very same stuff of which social exchanges are made, it has a singular place in the collective production, for the simple fact that a work of art has a particular quality that sets it apart from other products of human activities. This quality is its (relative) social "transparentness." If a work of art works, it invariably aims beyond its mere presence in space. It is open to dialog, discussion, and that form of interhuman negotiation that Marcel Duchamp called "the coefficient of art," which is a temporal process, being played out here and now. The basis on which this negotiation is established thus turns out to be the "transparentness" that singles it out as a product of human endeavor. The work of art in fact shows (or suggests) at one and the same time its manufacturing and production process, its position in the interplay of exchanges, the place—or the function—it earmarks for the onlooker, and, last but not least, the creative behavior of the artist (in other words, the sequence of postures and gestures that form the artist's work, and that each individual work passes on, in the manner of a sample or marker). So every Jackson Pollock canvas connects the trails of paint so closely to a pattern of artistic behavior that the trails appear as its image—as its "necessary product," to borrow Hubert Damisch's phrase. The beginning of art is the behavior adopted by the artist—that set of arrangements and act whereby the artist acquires his relevance in the present. The "transparentness" of the work of art comes partly from the fact that the gestures forming and informing it, which are freely chosen and invented, are part of its subject. For example, over and above that popular icon, Marilyn Monroe, the sense of Andy Warhol's Marilyn comes from the industrial production process adopted by the artist, which is governed by an altogether mechanical indifference towards the subjects chosen by him. This "transparentness" of artistic work runs counter, needless to add, to those ideologies that, doubtless out of some obscure nostalgia for the victims of their early incarnation, try to revamp religion in art. So this transparentness is bothersome, because it is the very form of artistic exchange. We know that once any kind of production is introduced into the exchange circuit, it takes on a social form that no longer has anything to do with its original usefulness. It acquires an exchange value that duly and partly covers up and masks its primary "nature."

The fact is that a work of art has no a priori useful function. Not that it is socially useless, but because it is available, flexible, and has "infinite propensities." Put another way, it commits itself, straightaway, to the world of exchange and communication—the world of "commerce" in both meanings of the word. Common to all goods is the fact that they have a value, namely, a common substance that encourages their exchange. This substance, according to Marx, is the "quantity of abstract work" used to produce this item. It is represented by a sum of money, which is the "abstract general equivalent" of all goods taken together. It has been said of art—by Marx first and foremost—that it represented the "absolute merchandise," because it was the very image of value. Nowadays, this idea is becoming common currency here, there, and everywhere. But what exactly is being referred to? The art object, not the practice of art. The work as it appears to be shouldered by the overall economy, and not its own economy. Art, let us remember, represents a barter activity that cannot be regulated by any currency, or any "common substance." It is the division of meaning in the wild state—an exchange whose form is determined by the form of the object itself, before being so by determinations outside it. So it is the artist's praxis that constructs the link which will be maintained with his work. In other words, what he produces in the first instance are relations between people and the world, by way of aesthetic objects. Of course, some artists don't give a damn, and reproduce, as such, something akin to alienation, thus fueling their petty trade in signs.

But present-day art is also striving to produce situations of exchange, and relational space-times. It is the counter-merchandise. Unlike merchandise, it conceals neither the work process, nor the use value, nor the social relations that allowed its production. It does not reproduce the world that it has been taught. It tries to invent new worlds, taking human relations as its material.

TRAFFIC

CAPC Press Release [Excerpt], 1996

With the arrival of the Internet, the Infobahn, and increasingly sophisticated video games, Interactivity is now an integral part of our culture.

In art, the exploration of interactive processes, the creation of spheres of user-friendliness, and the mechanisms of interhuman relationships have become the crucial themes of the 1990s. The interhuman space can today be considered, both in theory and in practice, to be the horizon of the new generation of artists: where Conceptual art was based on reflexivity (critical analysis), and the art of the 1980s on communication (media impact), art in the present decade is moving towards relationality.

The artists presented in "Traffic" deal with interhuman relationships as the foundation of their work: some build possible relational models, others produce concrete interactions, collaborating among themselves or with specialists, while others study existing social relationships.

Their raw material is exchange, directly experienced, modelled, or represented. [...]

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR "MATTHEW BARNEY," "TRAFFIC," AND "URGENCE" EXHIBITIONS

Three-day opening schedule
CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 1996

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY

10 A.M.: Opening for children to the "Matthew Barney" exhibition, with the artist.
12 P.M.: Opening of the exhibitions "Matthew Barney," "Traffic," and "Urgence."
Music: *Fantasia* by Schubert, proposed by Honoré d'O and interpreted by Hilde de Clercq and Isabelle Zeeghers.
NOON–6 P.M.: *Casting a Sitcom*, realized by Pierre Huyghe, conference room.
NOON–6 P.M.: Sessions at Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Biographical Cabinet.*
NOON–7 P.M.: Screening of Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 1*, communication room.
3 P.M.: Press Conference with Nicolas Bourriaud, Great Nave.
4.30 P.M.: Round-table discussion with Eric Troncy and: Yves Aupetitallot, Bernard Marcade, Franck Perrin, Franck and Giorgio Verzotti Gautherot, Atrium, first floor.
6.30 P.M.: Opening of the exhibition "Le temps pour nou(s) ... 24 images–seconde," Gallery For Life, 160 cours Victor Hugo.
6.30 P.M.–9 P.M.: *Arabic Jokes*, sound project by Jens Haaning is broadcasting over at 138 Victor Hugo.
8.30 P.M.: Screening of Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead*, chosen by Matthew Barney, Jean Vigo Cinema, Franklin Street, in the presence of the artist.

SATURDAY, 27 JANUARY

11 A.M.: Meet the artists of the exhibition "Traffic," proposed by Eric Troncy, conference room (interviews in English).
2 P.M.: An artist workshop for children with Matthew Barney.
2.30 P.M.: Screening of *Vicinato*, realized by Carsten Höller, and Philippe Parreno Rirkrit Tiravanija, conference room.
3 P.M.–6 P.M.: Sessions at Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Biographical Cabinet.*
3 P.M.: Conference with Luc Steels, director of Artificial Intelligence and Artificial Life Laboratory, VUB, Brussels: "The origin of language and meaning," presented by Carsten Höller, conference room.
5 P.M.: Screening of two films of Matthew Barney: *Cremaster 1* and *Cremaster 4*, conference room.
6.30 P.M.–9 P.M.: *Arabic Jokes*, sound project by Jens Haaning is broadcasting over at 138 Victor Hugo.
6.30 P.M.: "Experiences of telepathy and the feeling of being observed" by Carsten Höller, conference room.
7 P.M.: Bus tour, proposed by Pierre Huyghe.
8 P.M.: Film screening of Sergei Parajanov *Sayat Nova*, chosen by Daniel Buren, Cinema Jean Vigo, Franklin Street, in the presence of the artist.
10 P.M.: "Traffic" evening, proposed by Xavier Veilhan with DJ Gilb'r and Andrea Clavadetscher & Eric Schumacher, The Moon in the Gutter, 35 place des Capucins.

SUNDAY, 28 JANUARY

3 P.M.: *Vehicle*, a project by Xavier Veilhan, presented with the Frac-Collection Aquitaine, on the toit du Caesar, quai Louis XVII, I.
3 P.M.–6 P.M: Sessions at Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Biographical Cabinet.*
6.30 P.M.–9 P.M.: *Arabic Jokes*, sound project by Jens Haaning is broadcasting over at 138 Victor Hugo.

During the opening, the artists involved in the exhibition "Traffic" will present:
VANESSA BEECROFT: *Untitled*, Friday from noon to 1 p.m., west gallery, ground floor. Jes Brinch & Henrik Plenge Jakobsen: *Alternative Community*, Great Nave.
DOUGLAS GORDON: *Syndicate of Paris Sports*, betting involving a bookmaker on the English result of the football match Bordeaux-Guegnon.
JENS HAANING: *Flag Production*, manufacturing a series of flags for a week, Great Nave.
RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA: *Untitled (Drinking free trade)*, four spaces on the mezzanine; *Untitled (3 jours, 3 événements dans le regard de Marc Sanchez); Untitled (Ombres, Personnes se déplacant dans le lieu)*, Great Nave.

'TRAFFIC: LAST SPASMS OR RENAISSANCE?

Gilles de Bure
Technikart, 1 February 1996

No exhibition space in the world is harder to stage work in, more elusive and complex, than the nave of the CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux. The place is so strong, so powerful and majestic, that many people have broken teeth on it. Those who have defeated it can be counted on the fingers of one hand: Kounellis, Merz, Long, and, especially, Buren and Serra. This means that Nicolas Bourriaud's gamble of convening twenty-eight artists here from a dozen different countries could pass for a suicide attempt. To this day, only the mysterious, symbolic, and even the mystic had reason to be in this indomitable space. And now we find that Bourriaud has installed a sort of bonfire, a scout jamboree, a strange hippie pow-wow, around a fireplace design in 1972!

The first impression upon entry to the museum is cheerfully and charmingly reminiscence of Woodstock and Hogfarm, Amougies, and the Whole Earth Catalog, the houses of American amateur carpenters and free love. [...] And, curiously, it works: on the mezzanine, a jukebox with three small adjoining lounge areas (with cardboard furniture) equipped with telephones linked together in the best tradition of pick-up places in New York; here, a motorcycle parked under a bed placed on a mobile scaffold (a treatise of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*?); there, the casting of a sitcom; elsewhere, drawing exercises for a "Biographical Cabinet"; elsewhere again, the ability to record, very officially, negative comments about the show. [...] And then, here and there, simple or complex computers, video monitors, telephones, projections of all kinds. [...] In short, a relational and multimedia debauchery that illuminates perfectly the generic title chosen by Bourriaud, "Traffic." [...]

To see the unrest in the nave of the museum, to consider the mass of two hundred people, craftsmen, volunteers, students of Fine Arts [...] joined by Nicolas Bourriaud,

in Bordeaux, in the service of his plan, obviously, the challenge of "exchange" was brilliantly won. For the rest, it will take more time: the extension of the role of the actors of "Traffic," and that of the digestion and assimilation of the spectators. One leaves "Traffic" with a furious desire to read or reread McLuhan, Virilio, and Taguieff. [...] One leaves "Traffic" with impatience to participate in what is yet to come. [...] One looks back on "Traffic" by asking whether this was one last spasm or a renaissance; whether the generation assembled by Nicolas Bourriaud has buried in beauty the most brilliant examples of French art it is said to threaten, or whether, on the contrary, it announced by its freshness, its novelty, and its mystery what Jean-Louis Froment, the shaper and master of this beautiful place, calls the "passage into another millennium"?

TRAFFIC

Carl Freedman

Frieze, May 1996

A participating artist suggested to me, as a helpful introduction, that "Traffic" was "a great show, but the works aren't very good." Faced with a sprawling mass of rough constructions, giant sculptures, messy forms, and the drone of scattered and contesting video presentations in the brown, expansive gloom of the museum's cavernous main gallery, I was curious to know what could have been meant by "great."

It transpired that pleasure and enjoyment were not to be found in the exhibition itself but in the week-long gathering of the thirty-odd artists involved. Under the auspices of an "exchange of ideas," the artists talked, drank, dined, and danced together whilst creating, preparing, and installing their different works. For Nicolas Bourriaud, curator of "Traffic," the gathering was central to his theme, awkwardly formulated as "the interhuman space of relationality." It's an unhelpfully vague concept, directed towards an encapsulation of the increasing prevalence of some kind of "interactivity" in contemporary art, in which the artwork is seen as a vehicle for engendering and mediating relationships between the artist and others, and the viewer is increasingly involved as an active participant or collaborator. Its field of concern is the social, and in particular the "reality" of lived experience within the domain of the everyday. This incorporation of "life" entails a commensurate emptying out of art and artistic conventions. The anti-form style that prevails in "Traffic" involves the use of low-grade materials, a disinterest in elaborate fabrication processes, and a general emphasis on proposition rather than end product. The artworks are often based on a performance, events or actions, presented live or in the form of documentation, recordings, or the display of related props and souvenir objects.

"Traffic" predictably included the model practitioner of this kind of art—Rirkrit Tiravanija. Around the second-floor viewing gallery he provided simple, user-friendly arrangements of tables and chairs made from brown-packaging cardboard, each with a free minibar of red wine and mineral water. Another, surprisingly intimate, form of interaction was found in Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's séance room, where, in collaboration with the artist, one could recall early memories in an effort to draw a floor plan of one's childhood home. Attendant thoughts and feelings swim up from the past and are added to the drawing as brief complementary notes, the finished plan joining others on the room's walls. It was a pleasant experience and therapeutic in an uncertain way.

Lothar Hempel expanded the constituency of the show by approaching local social groups. Producing an unassuming and quietly generous work, he knocked together a four-walled space, and on the inside sketched the facades of anonymous housing blocks, illuminating them with shadowy projections of silhouetted leafless trees. On the outside, he displayed information and educational material from several groups, including an open house for people with suicidal tendencies, an esoteric self-discovery dance school, and a support organization for prostitutes.

Between this and a massive yellow floating balloon, a workshop for producing flags for new countries, and the metal chamber of a primitive welded-steel flotation tank, was the great pink lump of an alternative domestic habitat consisting of cave-like dwellings complete with wooden beds, a cooking area, and communal seating, all atmospherically enhanced with taped nature noises. Its two enthusiastic creators, the Danish artists Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, had planned round-the-clock occupation of the dwelling for the duration of the show, but were initially restricted to public opening hours by museum regulations. They later abandoned their new home due to boredom.

Some works were comprehensively stupid, like the girl standing on a table in a cutesy rubber mac, badly intoning "I'm Singing in the Rain," while someone sprinkled water over her head. Others, like that of the Californian artist Jason Rhoades, were inspirational. He persuaded the museum to give him 51 percent of the money towards the cost of a brand-new saloon car and showed some photographs of his new purchase parked at different locations in and around LA. Though the museum retains a majority share ownership, Rhoades gets to keep the car at home for his own use and pleasure. Liam Gillick's fanciful *Parallel World* creations, which revel in an anachronistic conceptual obduracy, seemed entirely inappropriate and could only have been included on the undeclared basis of personal friendship "relationality." Another artwork, consisting of a floor-to-ceiling forest of string, silver-foil boxes, stuffed shapes, and two women playing a piano, remained firmly in the realm of the unknown.

"Traffic" and Bourriaud's concept of "relationality" were just too unspecific to be capable of defining a new art, especially when so many of the works did little to support the exhibition's premise. This was an ambitiously funded exhibition that was only able to provide the viewer with a largely familiar array of objects and images. With the primary beneficiaries of "Traffic" tending to be the participating artists and their associates, Bourriaud may need to look at what actually constitutes the socio-political determinants of his "interhuman space."

TRAFFIC: CAPC MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Giorgio Verzotti
Artforum, May 1996

Perhaps the work that best summed up the aims of "Traffic," an exhibition dedicated to the art of the 1990s, was the fireplace Xavier Veilhan installed directly across from the entrance to the main room of the museum. Primarily, this work represented an attempt to blur the line between the "sacred" space of the museum and the "traffic" of the everyday. But the work also embodied what curator Nicolas Bourriaud calls "relational esthetics": the "art" was as much the viewers sitting around the fire that burned inside this black metal structure as the object itself.

Of the pieces presented here, some had already been shown elsewhere, others were created specifically for this site. In keeping with Bourriaud's emphasis on art that investigates interpersonal exchange, many of the thirty-odd artists who exhibited their work also participated in outside activities—including lectures and conferences that were held in conjunction with the exhibition. This focus was borne out by many of the works themselves. Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, for example, presented a series of "Séances Autobiographiques" ("Autobiographical Sessions," 1996) that invited visitors to talk about and draw plans of their homes. Rirkrit Tiravanija offered "services" to the general public, including cardboard armchairs and bottles of mineral water. Creating one of the most impressive installations in the exhibition, Angela Bulloch collected an assortment of regulations—including the rules to which call girls in English pubs are required to adhere—in what could be seen only as a kind of manifesto.

Though certain works had a spectacular dimension, the aim seemed to be to establish a relationship with reality rather than to exclude the outside world altogether. This was evident in Vanessa Beecroft's partially dressed, bewigged performers; in Gillian Wearing's two videos; and in Henry Bond's quasi-narrative videos. Lothar Hempel sought out four local organizations for his installation: from the most banal, a dance school, to the most unconventional, an association of people who like to criticize others. He then exhibited materials furnished by these groups on the exterior of a construction that evoked a set for a TV show, complete with fake buildings and spotlights. The set seemed to indicate the possibility of overcoming the separation between the museum and the city, between art and life.

In reflecting on these relationships, not all of the participants, unfortunately, contributed their best work, while certain schemes that were devised by the artists during the course of the show seemed questionable at best. There was much interesting work to be seen, however. Certainly the most beautiful image was a hot-air balloon with a lighted chandelier attached to it, which had been created by Philippe Parreno and Maurizio Cattelan. This bizarre object, which floated through the air to the great delight of onlookers, presented a simple, unpretentious solution to the problem of the relationship between the work and its context.

TRAFFIC

Emily Tsingou
Zing Magazine, Autumn/ Winter 1996–1997

To the casual visitor of the show, "Traffic" seemed a bit confusing. Screened by the foggy principle of interactivity, the show included a large number of interesting artists from Vanessa Beecroft, Noritoshi Hirakawa, Henry Bond, and Liam Gillick to Jason Rhoades, Philip Parreno, and Douglas Gordon. The works involved a range of approaches to different media, setting the tone of the show as an urban cabinet where one could easily find an area of interest ranging from computer animation (Miltos Manetas) to a hanging-out area (Xavier Veilhan's fireplace).

For a brief moment, and on a theoretical level, the show attempted an interesting claim. The idea, though, of interactivity is not a very lucid one, especially if one considers that it could be stretched to such an extent as to encompass any artwork and the presence of a viewer (even in its traditional sense, art functions at that level). Trapped in a need to claim a direct rapport with interactivity, some artworks (especially video work and painting) seemed forced to "fit in" with the rest. This, resulting in a lack of concreteness, turned the plausibility of interactivity, on the whole, into something very slim on a visual level.

The large hall of the Capc Musée—featuring heavy stone walls, impressive archways, and a warehouse-chaos ambient—proved a difficult setting, leaving the works to appear unintentionally muddled together, resulting in a disruptive whole. A museum is not the ideal space to put forward such ideas, because the works tend to lose their dynamic once placed in vastly edited architectural surroundings—works tend to intercede rather than interact. Crucially, though, the museum functioned as a shield for the exhibitors, declaring acceptance of and respect for artists who belong to a relatively young generation. Contrary to one's expectations, this was the most interesting aspect of the show: that is, turning the building into a "shock-and-shield" vessel—shock because the works evidently were not catered for in this context, and shield because they were accepted in an environment of academia. Overall, the show bore the characteristics of a traffic jam: at a standstill and agitated.

23

EXHIBITION

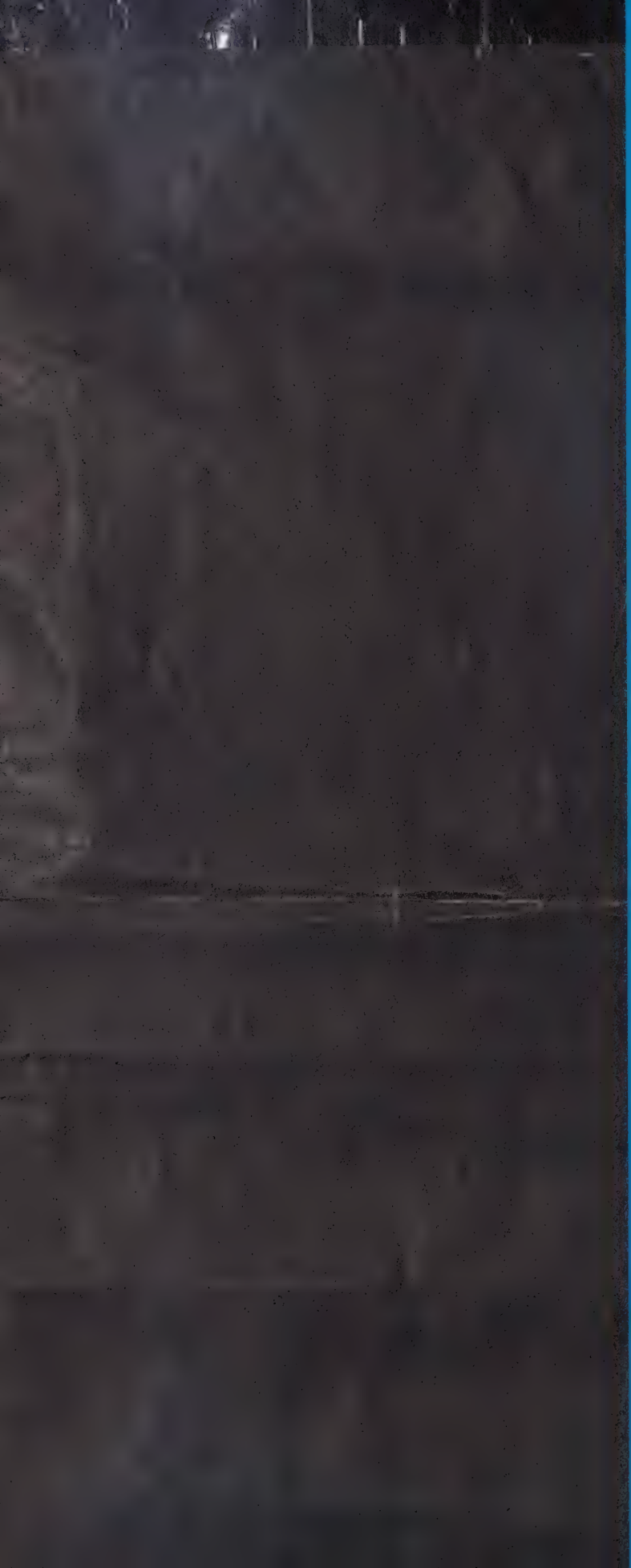
Cities on the Move

LOCATION

Secession, Vienna

DATE

26 November 1997–18 January 1998



CURATORS

Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist

ITINERARY

CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 5 June–30 August 1998; PS1, New York, 18 October 1998–10 January 1999; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, 29 January–21 April 1999; Hayward Gallery, London, 13 May–27 June 1999; various venues across Bangkok (co-curated by Ole Scheeren with Thomas Nordanstad), 9 October–30 October 1999; Kiasma Museum Helsinki, 5 November–19 December 1999

ARTISTS

Exhibited in Vienna and Bordeaux: Arahmaiani, Nobuyoshi Araki, Cai Guo Qiang, Yung Ho Chang, Chen Shao Xiong, Chen Zhen, Chi Ti-Nan, Choi Jeong-Hwa, Charles Correa, Heri Dono, Edge (Michael Chan/Gary Chang), Hanoyo, Geng Jianyi, Simryn Gill, Itsuko Hasegawa, David O'Heilly, Herzog & De Meuron, Oscar Ho, Richard Ho, Ho Siu Kee, Tao Ho, Takashi Homma, Huang Chin-Ho, Huang Yong Ping, Arata Isozaki, Toyo Ito, Sumet Jumsai, Chitti Kasemkitvatana, Kiyonori Kikutake, Jinai Kim, Soo-Ja Kim, Aglaia Konrad, Koo Jeong-A, Rem Koolhaas, Kisho Kurokawa, Surasi Kusolwong, Lee Bul, Liang Ju-Hui, Liew Kung Yu, Lin Yilin, Choi Wook, Ken Lum, Greg Lynn, Fumihiko Maki, Fiona Meadows and Frédéric Nantois, Sohn-Joo Minn, Rudi Molacek, Mariko Mori, Takashi Murakami, Matthew Ngui, Tsuyoshi Ozawa, Ellen Pau, Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija, Kazuo Sejima, Seung H-Sang, Shen Yuan, Shi Yong, Judy Freya Sibayan, Marintan Sirait and Andar Manik, Yutaka Sone, Aaron Tan, Fiona Tan, KNTA, Takahiro Tanaka, Tay Kheng Soon, Chandraguptha Tenuwara, Tsang Tsou-choi, Wang Du, Wang Jianwei, Jun-Jieh Wang, Wong Hoy-Cheong, Wong and Quyang Associates, Xu Tan, Riken Yamamoto, Miwa Yanagi, Ken Yeang, Yin Xiuzhen, Zhan Wang, Zhang Peili, Sarah Szee, Zheng Guogu, Zhou Tiehai, Zhu Jia, Harvard Project on the City: Shopping, Fractures, Duang Prateep Foundation

CATALOG

Cities on the Move. *Ostfildern: Hatje. Texts by Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist, with essays by Duangrit Bunnag, Lee Weng Choy, Desmond Hui, Takeshi Kitano, Kuo Pao Kun, David D'Heilly/Kayoko Ota, William Lim, Wang Mingxian, William J. Mitchell, Jonathan Napack and others.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 88 individuals and groups
Number of art works: unknown
Total attendance: unknown

Rather than present an exhibition about contemporary Asia through a show of contemporary Asian art, curators Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hou Hanru addressed more broadly the ground of the region's modernization in the hyper-growth of its cities. "Cities on the Move" combined work by architects and artists in dense and unruly displays that reflected the character of the urban development that was its theme. It also created a unique exhibitionary model as it moved through seven cities over two years, that of an evolving show reconstructed radically for each venue. The exhibition, like its subject, was represented as a process of insistent change.

Both curators were active in the expanding world of international biennials, with Obrist serving on the curatorial team for the first "Manisfesta" and Hou Hanru organizing part of the Second Johannesburg Biennial. Obrist already had developed the notion of an exhibition that varies in every location with a mutating show of instruction works called "Do It." "Cities on the Move" was also conceived as changing as it traveled from city to city, generating new projects and adapting to new circumstances. Exemplifying Obrist's general view of exhibitions as opportunities for experimentation, these exhibitions also connect with the idea of the museum as laboratory. The title "Cities on the Move" recalls the phrase "museum on the move" associated with Alexander Dorner, the pioneering German museum director of the 1920s who promoted the idea of a flexible, dynamic institution responding to current developments across disciplines.

In combining art and architecture, "Cities on the Move" was a vehicle for cross-fertilizing research into the developing condition of cities in Asia. The Vienna catalog was not a record of the show but an extension of it, presenting the proposals, projects, and reflections of invited artists, architects, and urbanists. Both exhibition and catalog were intended to take advantage of the serendipitous interactions of their elements, provoking unanticipated ideas that might carry into future venues. In this the show's structure and process mirrored one of its central themes, Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas's notion of the "City of Exacerbated Difference." The product of his study of cities around China's Pearl River Delta, it describes a new kind of megalopolis whose development comes not through rational planning but by opportunistic action and chance occurrence amid the frictions of extreme diversity.

"Cities on the Move" was first presented in the historic building of the Vienna Secession, one of two major exhibitions commemorating the organization's centennial year. The cacophonous and crowded display seems a bizarre choice for an anniversary show in this elegant Jugendstil setting decorated by Gustav Klimt, the Secession's first president. But the Secession was established by dissenters from the conservative Austrian artists' association, and its membership included architects along with painters and sculptors. So it was a fitting, if odd, home for the exhibition, which moved out into Vienna with billboards and a Thai tuk-tuk whose twin was installed inside the Secession, and through a pipe structure allowing communication between the show and the street.

The Vienna run of "Cities on the Move" coincided with a major Asian financial crisis, and the exhibition opened in the wake of currency collapse in Southeast Asia and falling Asian stock markets. This economic situation was an appropriate stage for the show's commentary on globalization and the perils of hypercapitalism, dysfunctionalities of expanding cities and ecological crises accompanying industrial growth and population change. The one Asian city to which the show traveled was Bangkok, where the financial crisis had begun two years before. Without a large museum the show underwent its most extreme transformation, spreading throughout Bangkok into diverse spaces and onto billboards and posters. By then, the crisis was well over, and the cities of Asia again were booming.

Eröffnung der Ausstellung am Dienstag, 25. 11. 1997, 19 Uhr
Begrüßung Werner Würtinger, Präsident der Wiener Secession
Zur Ausstellung sprechen Hou Hanru & Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Kuratoren
Performances

Dauer der Ausstellung 26. 11. 1997 – 18. 1. 1998
Öffnungszeiten Di – Sa 10 – 18 Uhr, So 10 – 16 Uhr
Friedrichstrasse 12, A-1010 Wien
Telefon +43 1 587 53 07
Telefax +43 1 587 53 07-34
email secession.ex@t0.or.at

GlaxoWellcome
Bookoff Graphikfonds

BKA Gesellschaft der Freunde der Wiener Secession art point

↖ Poster for "Cities on the Move" at the Vienna Secession, with image by Navin Rawanchaikul.

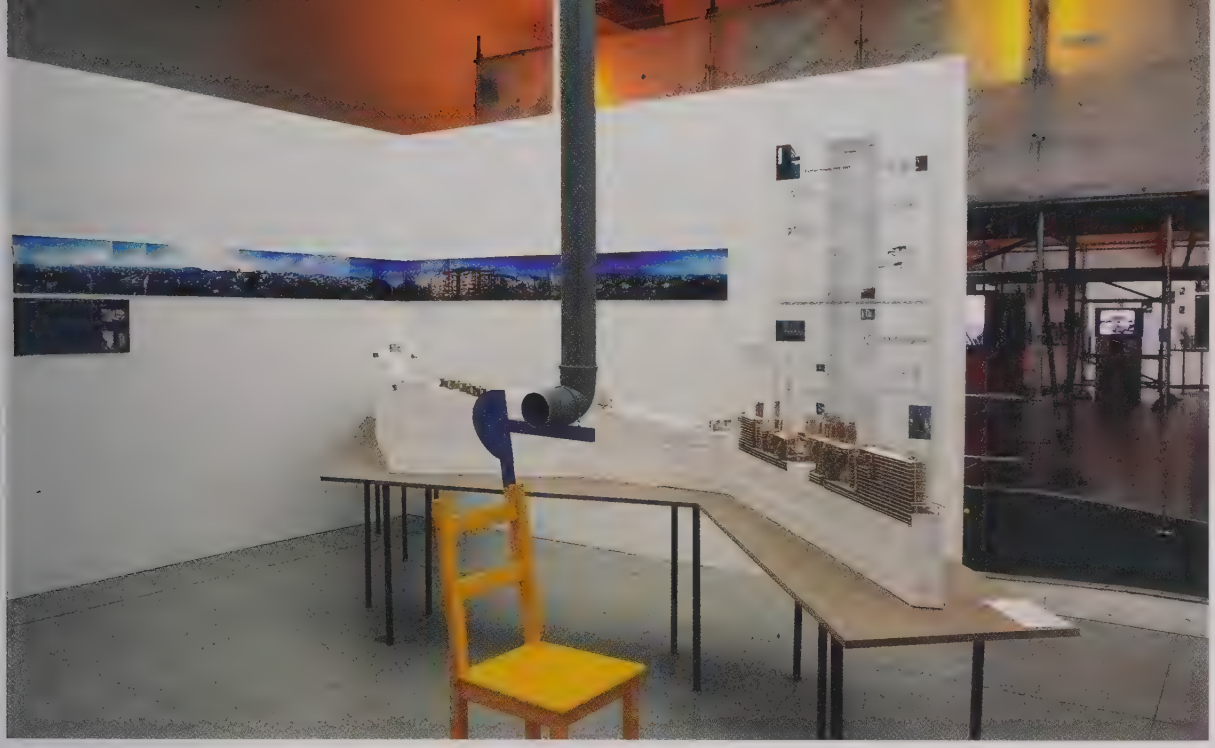
↑ Invitation card to the opening of "Cities on The Move," Tuesday, 25 November 1997, at 7 p.m. The card states that there will be a welcome by Werner Wurtinger, President of the Vienna Secession, and speeches by curators Hou Hanru and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, as well as performances.

← View of the outside of the Vienna Secession, with Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija's posters and an element of Matthew Ngui's *Will You Talk To Me?*—a yellow chair next to a plastic pipe that runs into the Secession building, allowing passersby to listen to sounds in the gallery or even hold a conversation with people inside.

↑ Tsuyoshi Ozawa's *Nasubi Gallery* (left), Wang Du's plaster sculpture of a topless prostitute, *International Landscape* (center), and Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Cinema Poster and Tuk–Tuk* (right). Posters and tuk-tuks decorated by Rawanchaikul and Tiravanija also appeared outside the gallery. The posters advertise a film invented by the artists about a tuk-tuk driver who moves from Bangkok to Vienna, where he falls in love with a beautiful Viennese girl.

→ Installation view showing Yutaka Sone's sculpture *Snow Leopard* (foreground), Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Cinema Poster and Tuk–Tuk*, and Heri Dono's *Inner City* (winged figures suspended from the ceiling).

ASIAN CITIES
CONTAINERS & CONTENTS
2
CITIES
4
ACTIVITY NODES



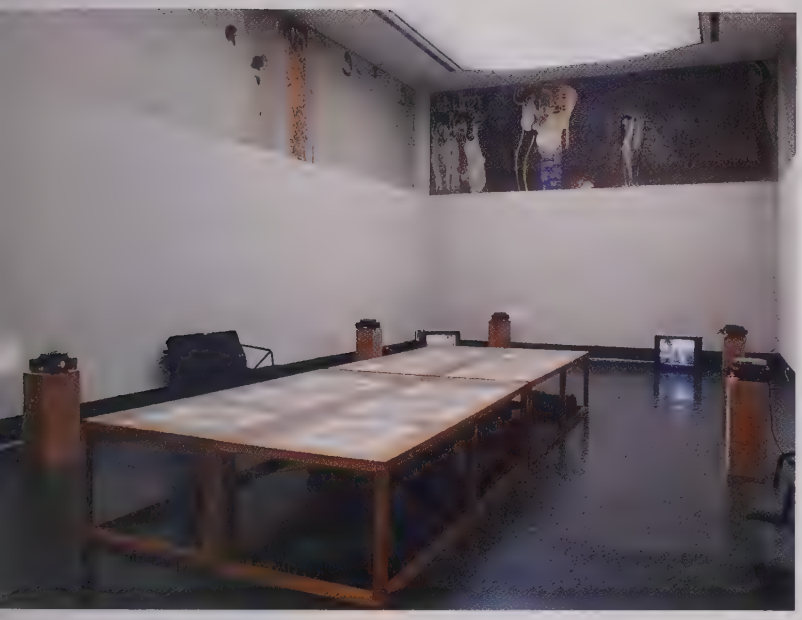
← Liew Kung Yu's *Pasti Boleh/Sure Can One*, and Heri Dono's *Inner City* (winged robot figures).

↑ Matthew Ngui's installation, *Will You Talk To Me?*, an architectural arrangement of PVC pipes that could be used for two-way conversations within the Secession and with passersby on the street.

↓ Architect Yung Ho Chang's *Asia Town*, a scaffolding structure that recalls the building sites common in fast-growing Asian cities.

Two of Wang Du's plaster sculptures of topless prostitutes, *International Landscape*. In the exhibition catalog, Wang stated that "Statues of Western prostitutes can be brought to an Eastern city and hence become part of the landscape of the Other. They will be installed side by side with works by other artists and can be seen as part of those works."

View of Yung Ho Chang's scaffolding structure *Asia Town*, alongside Huang Yong Ping's *Turtle Town*, a series of turtle sculptures placed at the feet of the structure. Huang's original proposal was to have live turtles placed under the structure, acting as "moving feet" for the scaffolding. The green AstroTurf area is Cai Guo-Qiang's *Red Golf*.



↖ Xu Tan's *Made in China*, installed at the Vienna Secession beneath Gustav Klimt's 1902 *Beethoven Frieze* on the wall above.

↑ Sarah Sze's installation at the entrance to the Vienna Secession.

← Installation view of Aglaia Konrad's projections of urban cityscapes.

CITIES ON THE MOVE

Hou Hanru & Hans Ulrich Obrist
Cities on the Move (exh. cat.), 1997

1.) Economic, cultural, and political life in Asia is shifting rapidly. Apart from the already established economic powers such as Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, new economic powers are being developed in China, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and other countries. The most visible "peak" of this rapid development is the pace of construction in cities of different scale. Connected to this is the pervasive expansion and explosion of urban space and metropolitanization. A considerable number of new cities have emerged all over the Asian Pacific Region. Typical examples are China's "Special Economic Zones," such as Shenzhen, Zhuhai and the Pudong Area of Shanghai. Thousands of high-rise buildings have been erected from grounds that were agricultural fields or abandoned land until a very recent past.

The urbanization and high-speed construction in Asian cities are also a process of international exchange of architectural and urban planning ideas and practices between Asian and foreign professionals. Many internationally known architects are attracted by such a dynamic context, while Asian architects are increasingly exposed to international influences. This process of confrontation and exchange has generated some very innovative but also controversial models of architectural–urban conception and practice specific to the particular context of Asia. Rem Koolhaas observes on his research trips to China that "some architects can design a skyscraper in three days or four in Shenzhen." This proves to be a new system of speed and efficiency. Such spectacular transformations are also a process of renegotiation between the established social structure and influences of foreign, especially Western, models of social structure, values and ways of living. A kind of mixture of liberal capitalist market economy and Asian, post-totalitarian social control is being established as a new social order. Culture, in such a context, is by nature hybrid, impure, and contradictory. According to Koolhaas the new urban growth is bringing about a kind of Cities of Exacerbated Difference (COED), which "is not the methodical creation of the ideal, but the opportunistic exploitation of flukes, accidents, and imperfections." Such a process of urban transformation inevitably causes contradictions, contestation, chaos, and even violence. It lays bare a fundamental paradox behind the pragmatic conviction, which believes in the cooperation between Asian lifestyles and social orders and a globalizing liberal consumer economy. Meanwhile, this incarnates perfectly the image of the postcolonial and post totalitarian modernization in the region and in our world today: the impulsive and almost fanatical pursuit of economic and monetary power becomes the ultimate goal of development. But, in resistance to this new totalitarian power of hypercapitalism, new freedoms and social, cultural and even political claims are being made by the society itself. These new claims are pushing the social actors to reconsider society's structure and order, especially in urban spaces which are called "Global Cities" because of their active roles in the global economy and relationship between established economic, political forces, and emerging forces: The city is a locus of conflict.

2.) *"One-quarter of the world's population is racing to become an urban population which equals or exceeds the world's existing middle class in both volume and mass"* (David d'Heilly.)

The obsession with numbers and superlatives measuring the quantity of urbanization is a prevailing common feature of many cities in Asia. The omnipresence of exploding figures in the architectural debate testifies to the tension between the apocalyptic and the utopian. Bangkok based Sumet Jumsai gives us some points of reference:
—In the course of the twenty-first century more than 60 percent of the world's population will live in cities.
—Of the twenty-three megacities with over fifteen million inhabitants, fifteen will be located in Asia by the year 2000.
—The Tokyo-Osaka corridor will be inhabited by more than fifty million people who will form a conglomerate city.
—Singapore has the largest hotel in the world: a seventy-three storey building.
—The Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, 450 meters [1,476 feet] high, accommodating 60,000 people, pretends to be the highest building in the world.
—In Tokyo, there are plans for the future Ecopolis (1000 meters [3,280 feet] high).

According to other sources, 80 percent of the high-rise buildings constructed during the last four to five years in Shanghai are by far empty, especially in the spectacular area of the Special Economic Zone of Pudong. In the meantime, the speculation of developers continues to accelerate and the prices of real estate remain excessively high. Urban congestion is one of the main challenges. In many cities the average speed of cars is reduced to the speed of walking—cities like Bangkok or Guangzhou seem to be collapsing and still they do work against all odds. In Guangzhou, Xu Tan describes this phenomenon as a symptom of a time of madness, voluntary schizophrenia, while Liew Kung-Yu mocks the visual terror of kitschy skyscrapers in Kuala Lumpur.

3.) Asia's modernization, urban growth and globalization are also a process of opening to other cultures and geographies. It should be noted that the fundamental motivation of such a process is a collective consciousness or desire to (re-)establish Asia's strong position in a modern world through competing with other, especially Western contexts. Tokyo-based critic Koji Taki evaluates the potential of the city to transgress national boundaries, to become a model for post-nationality. In recent decades, especially in the 1990s, Asian countries' new policies of development have coincided with the rapid globalization of a late-capitalist market economy, of the electronic mass media and communication industry, as well as a general disintegration of all established notions of boundary, nation, identity, morality.

Modernization in many Asian countries, which has been considered as a process of re-enforcement of national identities, sometimes even religious and ideological identities, is ironically accompanied by a general deconstruction and disintegration of established values and cultural modes. A schizophrenic, anxious but enthusiastic aspiration for a more modernized, somehow Westernized way of living and a society with more freedom and democracy is becoming the dominant dynamic. From this perspective there is no such thing as a collective Asian identity. Often such an aspiration is in conflict with traditional values and even the goal of modernisation itself. The implicit double-binds render the situation uncertain and unstable. Uncertainty, along with the disintegration and liquification of the "self," hence become the main issues that Asian people are about to cope with. The "theme-parkization" of urban space, which mixes cultural clichés and mere consumerism of differences, is a clear symptom of such an anxiety, a kind of horror vacui.

4.) *"Modernization ≠ Westernization" (Tay Kheng Soon).*

The globalizing modernization as a form of social, economic, and cultural development involves processes of "invasion" of international capitals and global capitalism. It also unavoidably opens up a window towards Western cultural modes and values promoted by the late capitalist media, especially electronic media. These media have been considerably influenced by the Western modes and turned toward a commodity-orientated mode of production and consumption. This is obviously opposed to the established official ideology and its implicit cultural values. Confrontations and conflicts between the two camps have become a driving force in Asian urban cultural life for the last decade. There is a tension between modernization and tradition that is embodied by constant shifts of openness, freedom claims, criticism, oppression and resistance... However, in the long run, and for the common interests, which are mainly to increase the condition of investment and development, local and national authorities and international corporations have tried to go around the ideological obstacles in order to attain a certain compromise. Culture, or creative activities, including art, and especially popular culture and media, are being deliberately sterilized into commonly acceptable and profitable formulas. One of them, as a Hong Kong television tycoon puts it, is that the TV programs should be "no news, no sex, no violence." One of the results is that, since the early 1990s the Hong Kong-based Star TV has succeeded in covering almost all major cities in Asia with its spectacularly aseptic entertaining through music videos or soap operas. All this actually means an indirect, invisible, and almost "comfortable" censorship and deliberated reduction of spaces for non-commercial cultural activities. Especially endangered are those for experimental activities and critical voices. On the contrary to the boom of new skylines full of high rising buildings and commercial spaces, artists and intellectuals are losing spaces and infrastructures for creation. An increasingly important new task for Asian artists now is to invent alternative "sub-spaces" or non-institutional "artist-run spaces." This is often spontaneous, ephemeral, highly flexible, and even immaterial. Process counts more than the object. Good examples are artists' museums such as Tsuyoshi Ozawa's "Nasubi Gallery" or Judy Freya Sibuyan's "Scapular Nomad Gallery". Both structures are extremely flexible museums without fixed locations which migrate within the city and permanently question their own parameters. They are situated in between situations—they are "Museums on the Move". Other artists like Lin Yilin, Shi Yong, Chen Shao Xiong, Liang Juhui, or Arahmaniani develop direct tactics of intervention in urban space through their mostly ephemeral actions. These gestures are often temporal interruptions of the high speed of urban mutation in order to open a kind of "emptiness," or moments of suspension, in the very center of construction turbulence: "Detournements," supplements, shifts or disturbances amidst traffic and business. In other works, alternative languages, informal expressions and temporal actions are used as effective strategies of intervention. The urban flaneurs are now turned into city guerrillas or what Geert Lovink calls "camcorder kamikazes" who are rebellious users of the camera instead of passive consumers (see David d'Heilly or Ellen Pau). The heroes of tactical media are all kinds of activists, nomadic media warriors, pranksters, hackers, street rappers ...

5.) "Cities on the Move" tries to trigger more exchange between art and architecture. According to Tapei-based architect Chi Ti-Nan, this "conjugation of imbeciles" is necessary because:
—Contemporary art is suffering the loss of value in the conflict of social production forces. The art scene seems impotent in dealing with the reality we face in the every day world.
—Architecture is supposed to be a mechanism for generating habitable physicalities and, therefore, risks to be turned into an utilitarian instrument.

The big interest in interdisciplinary dialogues is a global phenomenon in the 1990s and is as present in European and American discourse as it is in Asia. A significant number of artists and architects work in ever changing "promiscuous" collaborations" (according to Douglas Gordon, these open forms of collaborations are more like affairs and not like marriage). A good example is the loose team of Thai artists Navin Rawanchaikul and Rirkrit Tiravanija, who for "Cities on the Move" decided to work with cinema painters and tuk-tuk producers. Results of their numerous collaborations are a road movie, a billboard, a comic book, and a real tuk-tuk performance in the streets of Vienna. As with many other artists projects in "Cities on the Move," their tuk-tuk adventure has neither beginning nor end: from every point of view the spectacle has already started. The line between inner and outer landscape is breaking down. The project takes place in the museum but is also spread like a virus across the city. [...]

11.) "Cities on the Move" is the first joint presentation of art and architecture from Asian Cities in Europe. The exhibition endeavors to shed some light on the incredibly dynamic architecture and art scenes of these cities which are mostly unknown in Europe, and will try to introduce more than one hundred different positions and points of view to the European audience. Recurrent themes are Density, Growth, Complexity, Connectivity, Speed, Traffic, Dislocation, Migration, Homelessness, and Ecology. The different positions make clear that there is no such thing as an "Asian City" but that there are manifold heterogeneous concepts of the city: Some of the concepts in the exhibition and the present book are:

Agglomeration City, Airport City, Bubble City, Cell City, City for the People, City of Bites, City of Wheels, Compact City, Constellation City, Collage City, Compact City, Conglomerate City, Cut-and-Paste City, Diaspora City, Eco Media City, Elastic City, Electronic City, Entropic City, Flexible City, Fractal City, Fundamental City, Fuzzy City, Garden City, Generic City, Glam City, Global City, Horizontal City, Hybrid City, Improvised City, Interactive–Communal–Textual–Communicable City, Just-in-Time City, Linear City, Liquid City, Madang City, Marine City, Mirage City, Mobile City, Multigeneric City, Multimedia City, Neon City, Network City, Ocean City, Open-to-Sky City, Posturban City, Post-Identarian City, Real City, River City, Robot City, Sacred City, Shaman City, Sim City, Soft City, Sprawl City, Super-Fluid City, Symbiotic City, Techno City, Temporal City, Thin City, Time City, Transnational

City, Tropical City, Vertical City, Virtual City, Walled City, Water City ...

"Cities On The Move" is the first chapter of two main events to celebrate the Secession's centenary before touring to other Western institutions. In 1998 Robert Fleck will organize a historical and contemporary survey on the Secession as one of the most important laboratories and sites of exhibition for art of this century. The Secession-movement in the later nineteenth century was highly influenced by Asian culture. That the Vienna Secession is one of the most significant places where Western modernism was generated and developed provides not only an interesting space to present the story of Asian modernization and urban development, but also, more importantly, a "tourbillon ... in which the West wind and the East wind encounter each other."

CITIES ON THE MOVE

Douglas Fogle

Flash Art, no.199, 1998

A fascination with the socio-topographic complexity of the modern metropolis is not new in the twentieth century. What is new is the recent focus on the contradictory and conflicted histories of modernization in the rapidly developing economies of Asia, which have led to the development of contemporary hypercities such as Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Tokyo. It is in and around the shifting skylines of the contemporary Asian megalopolis that the battles over the significance of the legacy of modernism and modernization are today taking place. Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hou Hanru, "Cities on the Move" exuded the cacophony of the Asian hyper-architecture that it took as its model. Physically mimicking the controlled chaos of these evolving Asian urban landscapes, the curators brought together contributions by over seventy artists and architects working in and around Asia. They attempted to map the uniquely hybrid manifestations of Asian urban modernization, which they describe in terms of Rem Koolhaas's notion of "Cities of Exacerbated Difference" (COEDs).

For Koolhaas, conflicts and contradictions between the dictates of a rapidly expanding globalizing consumer economy, and the specific cultural histories of these territories, play themselves out in a manner quite unlike the teleological narratives of Western urbanization. It is on the scaffolding of Koolhaas's COEDs that the exhibition "Cities on the Move" erected its conceptual edifice. Literally infiltrating every square inch of the Secession's modernist architecture, the work in "Cities on the Move" ranged from the ephemeral to the concrete, integrating numerous models and plans for architectural projects with a wide array of sculpture, installation, video, photography, performance, and painting. In many cases, the works on view were highly applicable to the exhibition's thesis, as was the case with architects such as Oscar Ho, Aaron Tan, and Rem Koolhaas who contributed models, plans or conceptual studies of Asian cities, or Beijing architect Yung Ho Chang who made an architectural intervention in the galleries themselves, creating a bi-level rectangular scaffolding structure, which became the centerpiece of this exhibition. But architects weren't the only ones making incursions into the museum space as Matthew Ngui demonstrated with his installation of PVC pipes used for two-way conversations that traveled throughout the entire museum, into the Secession offices and out onto the street, turning the architecture of this space inside out. One of the questions that this exhibition perhaps inadvertently raised, is how architecture and art can coexist in a gallery setting. In this case, it became clear that Chang's scaffolding dominated the gallery space, forcing visual artists and architects alike into the periphery of the gallery space in somewhat Byzantine (but certainly urban) salon-style agglomerations. In many cases, the strongest works in "Cities on the Move" were installations and sculptural projects by a number of artists whose work did not always address the central thesis of the exhibition. While Liew Kung Yu's photo-collaged architectural conglomerations brought out precisely the tensions between modernization and tradition that were at the center of this exhibition, strong contributions, such as Jeong-A Koo's crushed aspirin, Lee Bul's gigantic inflatable character, and Sarah Sze's "cityscape" constructed from materials such as crates, gum packages, and toothpicks, did not necessarily always address the topic so directly.

On the other hand, projects such as Rirkrit Tiravanija and Navin Rawanchaikul's tuk-tuk installation, which involved two tuk-tuk taxis (one being driven around the city, and the other installed in the exhibition) and a

painted Thai-style movie billboard, infiltrated the city environs bringing the urban landscape of Bangkok to the streets of Vienna. At the same time, more ephemeral works, such as Simryn Gill's postage stamp project, Judy Freya Sibayan's *Scapular Gallery Nomad* (a gallery worn around the artist's neck), and Wong Hoy-Cheong's installation based on e-mail messages about the kinds of foods that people bring on trips, each had a more sedate presence in the galleries while bringing home the idea of the contemporary urban landscape as one fragmented and dispersed by a transnational post-urbanity. If at a certain level the power of the individual contributions of many of these artists was lost amidst the larger scope of the curator's theoretical edifice, the exhibition itself could be seen as something of a larger collaborative work, drawing attention to a number of known and lesser known artists working in the emerging hypercities of Asia while also demonstrating a kind of institutional subversion of traditional Western curatorial practice.

In the end, however, "Cities on the Move" was as much an experiment in the architectonic construction of an art exhibition as it was an investigation of the contemporary urban landscape of Asia. This was just as much its weakness as its strength. While this might be seen as problematic coming from the perspective of either the architectural or visual arts communities respectively, it is the parallels between this curatorial displacement and the counter-modernist development of the Asian supercities that made this exhibition so provocative. And while it seemed at times ad hoc and constantly in progress, "Cities on the Move" was itself an exhibition on the move, an organic, respiring, conglomeration of projects by artists and architects brought into a kind of uneasy proximity within the modernist walls of the Wiener Secession.

CITIES ON THE MOVE

Francesca Dal Lago

Art AsiaPacific, Issue 20, 1998

If a specific space can be associated with modernity—and with the profound transformations affecting the psyche and social habits of its inhabitants—it is the space of the city. Starting with the human agglomerations formed by the industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century and eventually marked by the crucial emergence of the urban middle class, the city has been the exclusive site for the denouement of modernity, and throughout the twentieth century has been associated with all forms of cultural production. It is, therefore, historically resonant and highly significant that the city was chosen as the theme for a recent exhibition which aimed to introduce the European public to the extraordinary changes that frantic modernization is bringing to Asian societies.

"Cities on the Move," a compelling exhibition at the Vienna Secession Museum in Austria, from 25 November 1997 to 18 January 1998, was the first event in a year marking the one hundredth anniversary of the historical Secession Movement, founded at the end of the nineteenth century to seek new forms of aesthetic expression with which to reflect modern life. Curated by Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist, the show included the work of artists from eleven Asian countries, North America, and Europe. The multidisciplinary character of the exhibition focused on the relationship between art and architecture in Asian cities and included works ranging from architectural projects to installations, video, photography and cinema. The choice of the city as a specific theme represents a much-needed critical approach.

In the recent flurry of events organized by Western museums on the subject of contemporary Asian art, cultural attribution has too often become the only basis for curatorial choices. Adopting national definitions as the main theme of an exhibition often obscures subtler and more revealing issues addressed by artists, and initiates a process of "othering" that provides an unnecessary distance between the daily conditions of the viewer and those experienced by the artist in his or her own context of creation.

"Cities on the Move" focused instead on the extremely complex and often unaccountable processes of change affecting Asian societies in the 1990s by taking the city as the major arena of change and employing its physical realm both as a literal and metaphorical space of cultural creation. The attempt to establish a direct reference to the visual hybridity associated with Asian metropolises was a specific aspect of "Cities on the Move," and a source of both excitement and frustration for unprepared museum-goers. In the installation of the exhibition—and in the catalog published in conjunction with the show—Hou and Obrist sought to re-create the state of exaggerated chaos that assails the first-time European visitor to an Asian urban center. In Obrist's definition, "the exhibition in itself is not a representation of cities which exist but it is a city in itself." The chaotic juxtaposition of artworks and artists (with nearly one hundred works displayed in the relatively small space of the Vienna Secession) strove for, and often succeeded, in re-creating the sense of dizziness experienced in a typical Asian megacity.

The willful abolition of traditional standards of museum practice was another curatorial strategy in "Cities on the Move." The museum (even more strikingly here, considering the historical heritage of the Vienna Secession) was turned into a creative workshop where ongoing communication among curators, artists, visitors and the institution was stimulated and where the boundaries between inside and outside were often abolished. Such was the case in Navin Rawanchaikul's and Rirkrit Tiravanija's collaborative project, *Cinema Poster*, 1997, which occupied a "space in-between," connecting the exhibition—and, by extension, the realities of Asian urban centers—with the external space of the city of Vienna. In a process that recurs in the work of these two Thai artists, the distinction between "art" and "life" was progressively erased: posters for the exhibition that advertised a Thai movie about

the romantic history of a tuk-tuk driver who came to Vienna to seek his fortune and fell in love 'with a Viennese girl were scattered around the city, prominently exhibited at the entrance to the museum and reproduced in local newspapers. Two tuk-tuks (three-wheeled motorbikes and the most popular commuter transport in Bangkok) were brought to Vienna for the show. One tuk-tuk—in the cabin of which a video played, showing the driver's view during his wanderings through Bangkok—was exhibited in the museum, and the other shuttled passengers through the streets of Vienna.

Another attempt to abolish the boundaries created by museum walls was evident in Matthew Ngui's installation *Will You Talk to Me?*, 1997. A tube connecting the gallery to the space outside the museum allowed visitors inside to converse with passersby on the street. Employing a typical strategy that aims to encourage dialogue between the artist and the public, Ngui recorded the conversations exchanged between visitors and passersby on sheets of paper that, once attached to the walls, assumed a nonsensical and often surreal quality.

A sense of the interdisciplinary approach of the exhibition and another example of its visual references to the architectural space(s) of Asian cities was evident in the striking work of architect Yung Ho Chang, who was commissioned to design an internal structure for the main hall of the Vienna Secession. Entitled *Asia Town*, 1997, Chang's scaffolding re-created the central-court enclosure, which was a constant module in Chinese architecture and the single smallest unit of traditional Chinese urban planning. His construction created an enclosed space, facilitating an atmosphere of reunion and encounter, and was enhanced by the cafe-style installation of Wong Hoy Cheong, entitled *Seeds of Change*, 1997, which was placed at the center of the "court." Chang's structure of steel pipes allowed artworks to be inserted at ground level and created a corridor on the second floor, visually isolated from the gallery by white plastic sheets enwrapping the upper part of the scaffolding. While providing a functional division that allowed the upper floor to be used as extra exhibition space, the plastic wraps recalled a typical sight on the streets of Asian cities, where construction sites and refurbishing work provide an ongoing, endless feeling of work-in-process.

At the foot of each pipe forming the scaffolding of *Asia Town*, Huang Yongping inserted a plaster turtle in a project called *Turtle Town*, 1997, which, as he states in the catalogue, "exists parasitically under the structure of Chang." The turtles, which in Huang's original project were supposed to be alive, recall the traditional steel-bearing elements of Chinese monuments, where the turtle as a symbol of longevity is often employed at the base of historically significant writings. Its position within this installation aptly symbolized the century-long traditions of Asia, which are bearing the burdens of modernization.

Other works in "Cities on the Move" made direct reference to different aspects of urban life in Asian cities. Zhang Peili 's video of city traffic, *Focus*, 1997, could be viewed on eight television screens—each increasingly out of focus—and uncannily recalled surveillance cameras used to monitor traffic congestion. Nomadism and constant migration as a recurrent condition in the life of the Asian population was referred to in Tsuyoshi Ozawa's "nomadic gallery," *Nasubi Gallery*, 1997. Employing a milk box—a container similar to a mailbox and once very common in front of Japanese houses—as a basic element in this installation, Ozawa produced "the smallest gallery in the world [which] opened in April 1993." Nasubi, meaning eggplant, is a pun on "Nabisu," a famous gallery in Ginza, Tokyo. Originally a critique of the gallery system in Japan, *Nasubi Gallery* eventually became the venue for real exhibitions. Ozawa invites artists to create works for these microspaces, placing the "rooms" in unorthodox sites around town or—in the case of "Cities on the Move"—in twenty-seven different locations around the Vienna Secession. The project doubles as Ozawa's own work and as a portable, non-profit gallery space that can be easily transported to different venues.

While predominantly Asian artists participated in "Cities on the Move," several non-Asian artists whose work deals with issues relevant to the central theme of the show were also invited to participate, as reminders of the effects of globalization on Asian cultural production. In a series of wall panels, Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas presented a sample of his studies of the social significance of radical architectural and urban transformations in East Asian metropolises. Lucerne-based artist Rudi Molacek displayed a digitally processed photograph, taken on the streets of Shanghai, at several locations in Vienna. In a series of striking photographic cityscapes, Austrian artist Aglaia Konrad represented the effects of reckless urban expansion on Asian cities.

Although the curators' willfully created chaos was one of the strongest aspects of "Cities on the Move," it seriously affected the possibility of grasping the full implications of individual artworks in the show. Visually and conceptually overwhelming, the exhibition left one with a sense of physical fatigue and mental confusion, with the multilayered visual experience converging into a chaotic impression of the incomprehensible processes of Asian modernization.

While this could provide stimulus for further investigation, a smaller selection of artists might have helped to maintain the conceptual strength of "Cities on the Move"without forfeiting a more in-depth understanding of the contributions of individual artists.

24

EXHIBITION

24th São Paulo Biennial

LOCATION

Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo, Parque do Ibirapuera, São Paulo

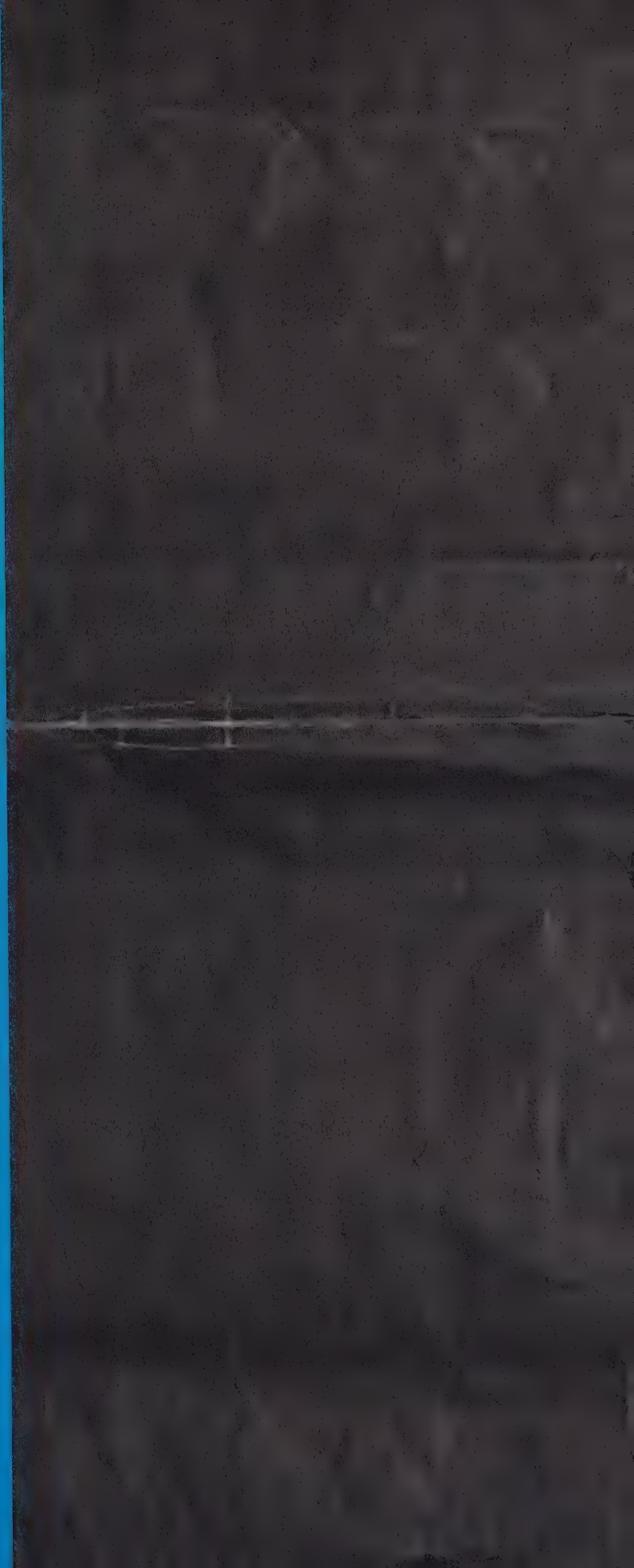
DATE

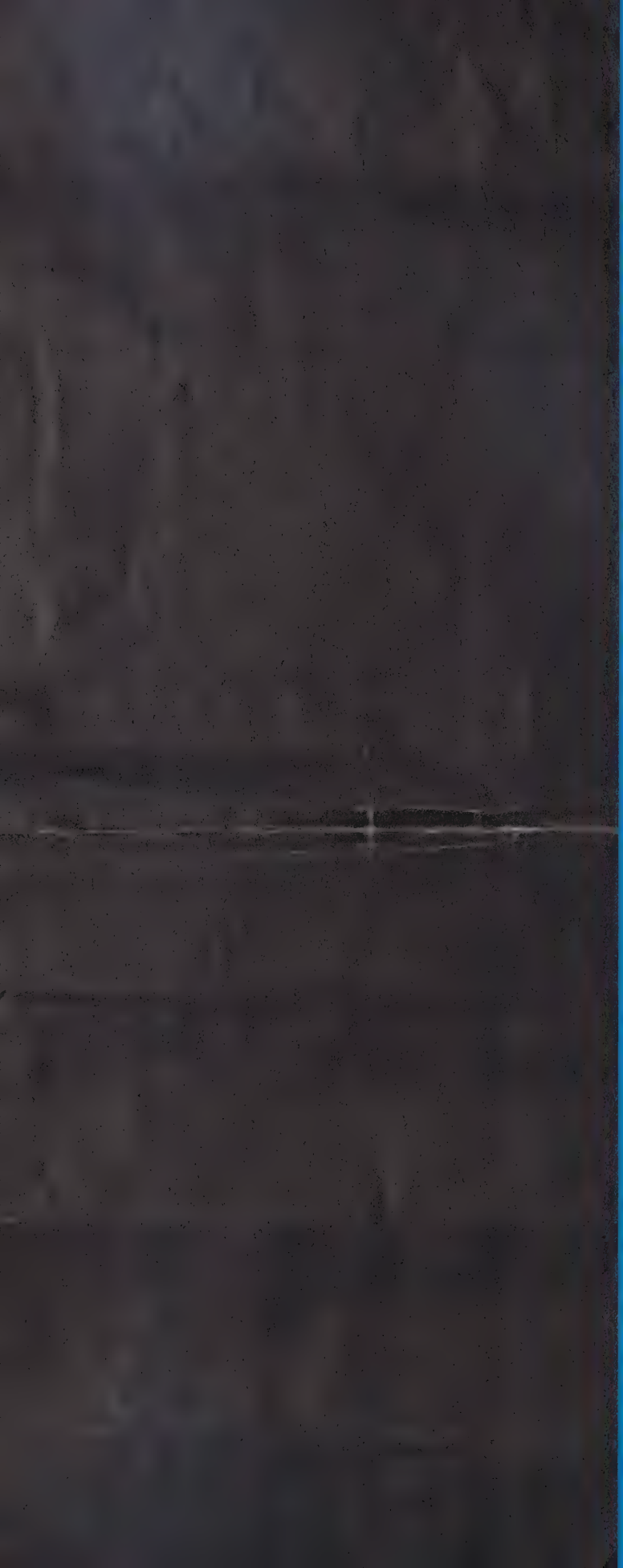
3 October–3 December 1998

CURATORS

Paula Herkenhoff (Chief Curator) and Adriano Pedrosa

"Historical Nucleus: Antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalisms": Adriano Pedrosa, Ana Maria Belluzzo, Aracy Amaral, Catherine David, Daniela Bousso, Dawn Ades, Didier Ottinger, Jean François Chougnet, Jean-Louis Prat, Justo Pastor Mellado, Kátia Canton, Luis Pérez-Oramas, Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, Mari Carmen Ramírez, Mary Jane Jacob, Paula Herkenhoff, Pedro Corrêa do Lago, Per Hovdenakk, Pieter Th. Tjabbes, Régis Michel, Robert Storr, Sônia Salzstein.





Valéria Piccoli, Veit Görner, Yannick Bourguignon. "Routes": Ami Steinitz, Apinan Poshyananda, Awa Meite, Bart De Baere, Ivo Mesquita, Lorna Ferguson, Louise Neri, Maaretta Jaukkuri, Rina Carvajal, Vasif Kortun. "Brazilian Contemporary Art: One and/among Others": Adriano Pedrosa, Paulo Herkenhoff. "National Representations": Anda Rottenberg, Andrea Rose, Anita Tapias Anna Mattirolo, Apinan Poshyananda, Awa Meite, Brigitte Huck, Carlos Aranda, Catherine De Croes, Clairrie Rudrum, Constantin Bokhorov, Edward Shaw, Fiach Mac Conghail, Gaspar Galaz, Gustavo Buntinx, Hervé Chandes, Jack Persekian, João Fernandes, Jon Tupper, Justo Pastor Mellado, Karin Stempel, Kazuo Yamawaki, Kuutti Lavonen, Lilijana Stepancici, Lorna Ferguson, Louise Neri, Maria Lind, Marianne Krogh Jensen, Miguel L. Rojas Sotelo, Miranda McClintic, Osvaldo Gonzalez Real, Pedro Querejazu, Pierre-André Lienhard, Rita Eder, Sania Papa Santiago B. Olmo, Saskia Bos, Sergio Edelsztein, Silvia Pandolfi Elliman, Vasif Kortun, Velaug Bollingmo, Virginia Pérez-Ratton, Young-Ho Kim, Xu Jiang. "Web-art": Mark van de Walle, Ricardo Anderáos, Ricardo Ribenboim

ARTISTS

Including: Mario Abreu, Georges Adeagbo, Carlos Aguirre, CoBrA , David Alfaro Siqueiros, Fernando Alvim, Michael Asher, Francis Bacon, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Artur Barrio, Anna Bella Geiger, Hans Bellmer, Louise Bourgeois, Candice Breitz, Waltercio Caldas, Carlos Capelán, Lourdes Castro, Soly Cissé, Nicola Costantino, Salvador Dali, José Damasceno, Iole de Freitas, Antonio Dias, Tarsila do Amaral, Olafur Eliasson, Touhami Ennadre, Max Ernst, Sylvie Fleury, Hilmar Fredriksen, Alberta Giacometti, Carmella Gross, Eva Hesse, Makki Kante, Seydou Keita, William Kentridge, Soo-Ja Kim, Abdoulaye Konaté, Joseph Kpobly, Elke Krystufek, Guillermo Kuitca, Moshekwa Langa, Geoff Lowe, René Magritte, Brian Maguire, Mark Manders, André Masson, Roberto Matta, Cildo Meireles, Beatriz Milhazes, Maurizio Mochetti, Thomas Mulcaire, Vik Muniz, Bruce Nauman, Ernesto Neto, Hélio Oiticica, Dennis Oppenheim, Tony Oursler, Wolfgang Paalen, Judy Pfaff, Francis Picabia, Sigmar Polke, Khalil Rabah, Robert Rauschenberg, Armando Reverón, Gerhard Richter, Miguel Rio Branco, Doris Salcedo, Malick Sidibe, Robert Smithson, Tunga , Kim Soo-Ja, Manit Sriwanichpoom, Francisco Tropa, Delson Uchoa, Adriana Varejão, Alfredo Volpi, Franz West

CATALOGS

Four-volume catalog: Routes; Brazilian Contemporary Art: One and/among Others; National Representations; Historical Nucleus: Antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalisms. *São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1998.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 326
Number of art works: 1,140
Total attendance: ca.400,000

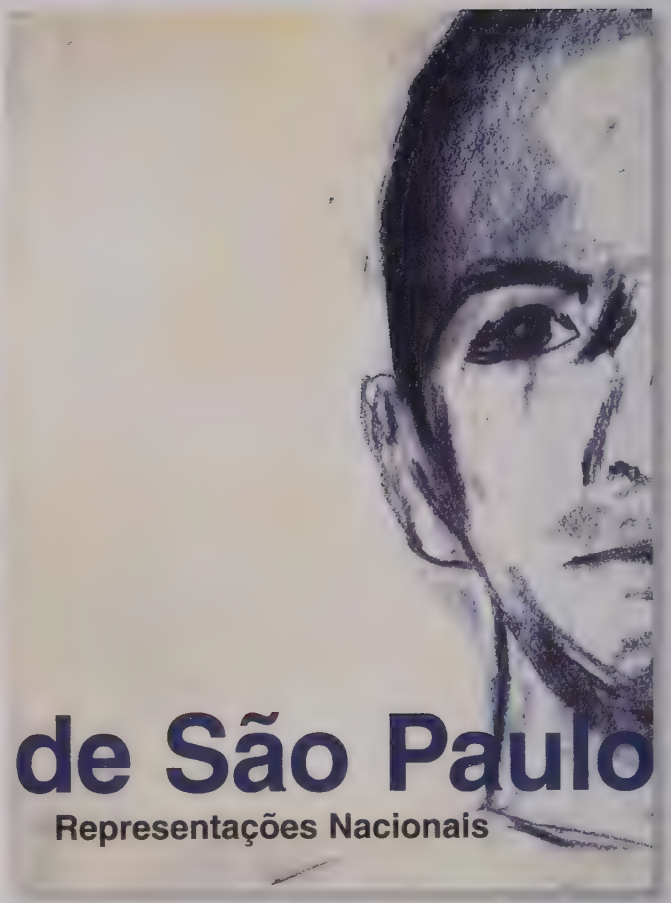
Through ambitious curation, the 1998 São Paulo Biennial satisfied the representational demands of an international biennial, the intellectual needs of a large thematic exhibition and the non-Eurocentric interests of the global art world. Chief curator Paulo Herkenhoff and his associate Adriano Pedrosa employed the notion of anthropophagy (cannibalism) as the organizing theme. Taken literally, anthropophagy relates to contemporary art engaged with body issues. But its more important significance for the exhibition was metaphorical, referring to Brazil having incorporated European and indigenous influences to forge a unique postcolonial culture. The exhibition itself can be seen in an analogous light, as emerging from the Brazilian ingestion of early European and more recent biennial models.

The São Paulo Biennial was created in 1951 by local industrialist Ciccillo Matarazzo to bring international contemporary art to Brazil, to give international exposure to Brazilian artists and to establish São Paulo as Brazil's cultural center, and ultimately as a world cultural capital. It was patterned after the Venice Biennale, with artists selected to represent their countries. While maintaining the function of national representation, over the years the São Paulo Biennial—like Venice—supplemented the national shows with specially curated exhibitions. These exhibitions often displayed historically significant artworks that the Brazilian audience otherwise never would have seen. The Biennial also was a critical resource for artists from Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America, an opportunity to see current work from Europe and the United States.

The 1998 version presented in São Paulo for the first time the kind of biennial created throughout the world in the 1990s, a show organized around a central theme with a group of international curators. Such curators played a major role in two sections of the exhibition. For "Reteiros, Reteiros, Reteiros, Reteiros, Reteiros, Reteiros, Reteiros" ("Routes, ..."), Herkenhoff divided the globe into seven geographic areas and invited outside curators to assemble art from given regions. He asked other curators to identify art-historical works related to the concept of anthropophagy for the "Núcleo Histórico" ("Historical Nucleus"). This section filled the third floor of the biennial pavilion with art going back to the seventeenth century, including works by van Gogh, Giacometti, and Bacon along with contemporary masters. No Brazilian artist was selected to represent the country in the first-floor presentation of national representatives, but they played an important role in the "Núcleo Histórico." And on the second floor there was a two-part presentation devoted exclusively to contemporary Brazilian art, one part curated by Herkenhoff and the other by Pedrosa.

The concept of anthropophagy provided fertile ground for the exhibition. Derived from Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade's 1928 "Anthropophagite Manifesto," it had played an important role in Brazilian and Latin American cultural theory. It also resonated with the postcolonial concerns of much current art and of the new biennials that had developed outside the Euro-American centers. Looking at historical and contemporary art through the lens of anthropophagy, the curators focused on a dense web of connections among bodily subject matter, colonial and postcolonial identities, views of artistic influence and theoretic constructs from a range of disciplines.

By 1998, Matarazzo's dream of São Paulo becoming a center of the art world had been realized, and the São Paulo Biennial played a crucial role. But this had not occurred by his city joining Paris, New York, and a few others as an artistic capital. Instead, São Paulo now functioned within a globalized art system supporting a growing number of biennials, with the transnational increasingly replacing the national. The next exhibition, delayed until 2002, was the first with a non-Brazilian chief curator. And beginning with the 2004 São Paulo Biennial, national representation was eliminated completely in favor of an overarching thematic structure.



↑ *Brazilian Contemporary Art: One and/ among Others*, one of the four catalogs for the 24th São Paulo Biennial.

↗ *National Representations*, another of the catalogs for the 24th São Paulo Biennial.

→ *Historical Nucleus: Antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalisms*, another catalog for the exhibition.

↑ Regina Silveira's *Tropel* (*Throng*), a vinyl banner installed on the facade of the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo, in the Parque do Ibirapuera. The pavilion was designed by a team lead by Oscar Niemeyer and Hélio Uchôa, and named after Francisco (Ciccillo) Matarazzo Sobrinho (1898–1977), founder of the São Paulo Biennial.

↖ Inside the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo, looking across (from left) to Edgar de Souza's *Shelter*, Ernesto Neto's *Goddess Ship*, and Arthur Omar's photographic series, *Anthropology of the Glorious Face—The Great Wall*.

← Korean artist Choi Jeong Hwa's *Encore, encore, encore* consisted of an inflated column of bright gold synthetic fabric, three floors high, with a bulbous angel on the top. The structure was kept upright by a ventilator and motor.

↑ View inside the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo, with Choi Jeong Hwa's *Encore, encore, encore* (left), Laura Lima's untitled performance (center), and various works of modernist sculpture.

→ View of the exhibition, showing Edgard de Souza's untitled wooden baby (center), and Emesto Neto's *Goddess Ship*, in the "One and Other" exhibition. On the column in the foreground is one of Michael Asher and Andrew Freeman's photographs, which were mounted on fourteen of the museum's pillars; they showed landscapes around *colonias* (*ad hoc* groups of shacks) in south Texas.

↖ Artur Barrio's *Book of Meat/Flesh* (foreground); Rosângela Rennó's photographic works from the series *Penitentiary Museum/Scar* (on the wall to the left); and Ernest Neto's photograph *Fetus Female* (on the far wall).

↑ In the "Color Axis" section of the historical exhibition, with Cildo Meireles's *Detour into Red*, an installation of red-painted furniture and objects, and Hélio Oiticica's *Tropicália* installation.

← Arthur Omar's photographic series *Anthropology of the Glorious Face—The Great Wall* (background) and Rochelle Costi's colorful photographic series *Rooms* (foreground).

↑ Cildo Meireles' *Detour into Red*. The work refers in part to the artist's childhood memory of seeing the body of a journalist who had been murdered for political reasons during the military dictatorship in Brazil.

← View of the "Color Axis" section of the historical exhibition, showing Hélio Oiticica's *Bilaterals and Spatial Reliefs* (foreground) and Cildo Meireles's *Detour into Red* (background).

← In the national section, Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury exhibited seven "rockets" from her *First Spaceship on Venus* series. The installation also included a soundtrack emanating from hidden speakers.

↙ View of the "Roteiros" exhibition, with Choi Jeong Hwa's monstrous flower-shaped sculpture, *Dangerous Relationship (Touch Me)*, and Dadang Christanto's *They Give Evidence*—larger-than-life-size figures made from terracotta powder mixed with fiberglass resin, each holding bundles of clothing that have been shaped to resemble human figures.

↑ Olafur Eliasson's *The Very Large Ice Floor* was exhibited in the national section. A cooling system kept the ice frozen. Visitors could walk on the surface, which also extended outside the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo.

← Kim Soo-Ja's Hyundai truck, which was laden with bundles of clothes, had traveled from Korea to Vienna for the exhibition "Cities on the Move" in 1997, and on to São Paulo for the 24th Biennial. In São Paulo, the piece was titled *Cities on the Move–2727 Kilometers*.

↙ Olafur Eliasson's *The Very Large Ice Floor*.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Paulo Herkenhoff

Historical Nucleus: Antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalisms (exh. cat.), 1998

What is my desire worth to you? An eternal question posed in the lovers' dialogue. We were capable of far worse atrocities!—What ghost is this that appears in those moments of desire's greatest plenitude? What metaphor is this that symbolizes a terrible fear of otherness? This text reveals the curatorial parameters adopted in the constitution of the "Núcleo Histórico" ["Historical Nucleus"] of the XXIV Bienal de São Paulo. We did not endeavor to develop a totalizing or triumphant vision of the issue of *antropofagia*. The curatorship of the XXIV Bienal de São Paulo took on as a starting point the "thickness of the gaze," following Jean-François Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, as an operational concept displaced towards the idea of "density." Thickness should not merely be present in art (its portrayal as "theme" would not be as significant), in the work of the curators, and above all, in the institution. The idea of a Núcleo Histórico indicates a cornerstone that differs from the tradition of "special exhibition rooms." We have abandoned the ideas of status ("special") or territorialization ("exhibition rooms"), as we felt it necessary to define our concrete historical debate, integrated by conceptual criteria effectively developed in terms of ways of seeing in both exhibition and text. The XXIV Bienal positions itself vis-à-vis the discipline of art history. We understand, following Giulio Carlo Argan, that contemporary history and criticism are not irretrievably linked to one another, so there should appear to be a split in the context of the Bienal. We also recognize the multiplicity of history's threads and that, in the case of art, the Eurocentric stance with its Hegelian orientation had created excluding parameters in the art environment. In the negotiation of loans of works, our choice led to a debate with directors from museums that traditionally deny loans for thematic exhibitions, set against historical displays that add a new understanding. The curators from the Tate, the Pompidou, or from MoMA were already familiar with the notion of *antropofagia* and were thus able to understand more easily its historical meaning within the perspective of the cultural formation of Brazil. A conceptual leap, to accept another version of art history, was the stance of the Louvre, the Orsay, the Besanson and the Prado. Many understood that "differential" of Brazilian culture, others did not.

The "Núcleo Histórico" should start from a non-Eurocentric vision. Which is the "dense" moment of art history in Brazil? The concept of "thickness" revealed answers: baroque, modernism, neoconcretism of the '60s–'70s. Modernism offered a challenging answer: *antropofagia*. The movement that took shape in São Paulo in 1928 with Tarsila do Amaral and Oswald de Andrade spreads in time throughout Brazilian culture as a strategy of cultural emancipation. Strangely, Brazil had never accomplished a large exhibition on *antropofagia* to discuss its cultural plurality. Furthermore, *antropofagia* acknowledges precedents and parallels in the history of art. It allows for a complex conceptual space for several fields of knowledge declared in the "Manifesto antropófago" ("Anthropophagite Manifesto"), such as history, anthropology, politics, philosophy, religion, linguistics, psychoanalysis. We were already aware that cannibalism granted Montaigne pragmatic data and space for the development of arguments in his *Essays*, allowing him to discuss the relativity of human values. How could we understand that the first such philosophical debate that took place in Brazil, and in France, dealt with issues of cannibalism?

Paraphrasing Borges, the Bienal would cease to illustrate or mirror dated discussions in order to focus a lens of Brazilian culture as a guide to contemporary art and history. *Antropofagia* is a relatively polemic concept for it not to be sanctioned as true. Nor to be fixed in images or styles. A debate therefore arises over such a conceptual issue already posited, with works of art that allow for concrete discussions and with crystalline and differentiated curatorial projects. The curatorship consisted in an intense process of reflection on the concepts as evidenced in the texts.

The Bienal de São Paulo is an immense undertaking that has taken a year and a half to develop. The intense involvement of dozens of curators created chronic difficulties in regard to the realization of their "themes" through the works. Something tended to occur that was different to other biennials: multiplicity, disparity, the contradiction of interpretations, or even the opposition or denial of the theme. *Antropofagia* as a concept of cultural strategy and its relations to cannibalism offered a dialogue model—the anthropophagic banquet—for interpretation. The process of gathering or stimulating interpretations—arriving at hundreds of concepts, conceptions, acceptations, elements, aspects, etc.—demonstrated the richness of the issue of *antropofagia*. We encouraged the emergence of its centrifugal conceptual vastness like the arrangement of a thesaurus. After this apparent dispersion, a centripetal movement of each curator was stimulated. Ironically, the ambivalent and polemical form of *antropofagia* provided a transparent relationship of curatorship–work–public in each interpretation. To understand the vastness meant understanding that the "Núcleo Histórico" would not constitute an encyclopedia of cannibalism nor that the Bienal would exhaust the issue. Thus the option for trims, cutouts and examples of a deliberate analysis of ambivalence. We differentiate *antropofagia* as a Brazilian cultural tradition from cannibalism; the symbolic practice, whether real or metaphorical, of devouring the other.

As a starting point, we demanded from the curators the precise curatorial program of each exhibition room, and we discussed the ultimately necessary adjustments. The space dedicated to the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries is centered on Europe's confrontation with the discovery of actual cannibalism in America and the introduction of the artistic genres in the colonization of this continent. The spaces dedicated to the nineteenth century, on the other hand, deals with the presence of cannibalism in the terrible underground of the Western subconscious. Despite articulating a diagram of the "Núcleo Histórico"

exhibitions, due to spatial difficulties it didn't correspond to the installation plan.

As a sufficiently wide concept open to multiple possibilities, the curatorial intention or strategy should be defined in each exhibition space. Each exhibition should constitute specific curatorial parameters so that each and the exhibition may be distinguished from the others by a distinct character. As such, what is actually being exhibited are the curatorial approaches as a discourse of the inventive and poetic reading of art. And above all, art itself as the mirror of the capacity for invention, reflecting myths and symbolic practices, differences and language.

It was fundamental in this process to require that the text and the curatorial project cohered. The works, or even some of the artists and the actual exhibitions, are present here as direct or indirect arguments, or the necessary crossing point between two historical moments. Superficial analysis fails to realize that *antropofagia* is a phenomenon of the breadth of the work of art. Intrinsic to the dynamics of *antropofagia* is that it redesign itself in response to challenges and as a political solution of language. Every time it becomes a theme or a mere image, it falls further from its origin. At the opposite pole may be found the "eccentric Eurocentrics": the re-emergence of Eurocentrism, mistaken for the modern project and its rationality, is often stronger in Brazil than in Europe. We avoid visual *necrophagy*, the pedestrian illustration of cannibalistic devourment. We avoid the slaughterhouse and cannibalism of individual psychological deviation or of the destitution resulting from disasters or hunger. Cannibalism is not a diet. It is always symbolic and it is in this sense that it attracts interest in this debate. The course taken relates to the issue of the fragmented body and its connection to language.

If the idea of appropriation lies at the heart of *antropofagia*, we planned to work with a sole example of the appropriated image: Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa*. This painting was appropriated by artists such as David Siqueiros, Asger Jorn, Jeff Wall, Thomas Struth. This squad of the *Medusa* included many others, like Kippenberger or Steele and Goldie in New Zealand. We chose a classical theme of cannibalism from Ugolino, and a pertinent example of transcultural appropriation: van Gogh and the Japanese woodcut. We chose examples that demanded a subtle theoretical construction that went beyond thematic and iconological issues, such as dealing with cultural autonomy; comparing entropy and *antropofagia*; reacting against autocannibalism; defining a repertoire of psychoanalytic, art historical, philosophical, economic, ideological, and linguistic issues. *Antropofagia* appears in diverse areas of culture, from literature to music. Furthermore, it is a dynamic concept capable of establishing a validity for our times. As a symbolic practice, cannibalism implies understanding relations of otherness. It is a metaphor in philosophy and in the reflection on violence. It encompasses the structuralization of societies, the birth of language or desire itself and the amorous fusion of individuals. The Bienal's "Núcleo Histórico" means that, for the first time, an exhibition directly integrates specific issues of Brazilian culture orchestrated in a discussion with Western art that joins Aleijadinho and Goya, Volpi and van Gogh, Lygia Clark and Eva Hesse in dialogue. In European art we find an anthropophagic corpus that extends from Goya to Géricault. Evidently, Freud's anthropology and psychoanalysis provided considerable contributions. Europe lived myths—Saturn devouring his sons—and the perplexity with the Other cannibal, a type of monstrification of the difference. Due to its complexity and deadline, the Bienal de São Paulo, unlike Kassel is not the statement of one curator, but a process to articulate the views of a small army of curators. The decision not to include an analytical text by the chief curator is justified in view of the fact that all exhibitions deserved important texts. The only things that interest me are those which are not mine, I would say. [...]

TO COME AND GO

Paulo Herkenhoff

Roteiros (exh. cat.), 1998

"Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros."

The word *roteiros* ["routes"] is repeated seven times in Oswald de Andrade's "Anthropophagite Manifesto." It is situated in between the paragraphs "Against the reversible world and objectivized ideas" and "The Carahiban instinct." "Roteiros ... " [i.e. the exhibition] is situated between the mechanics of "cadaverized" ideas and cannibalism, etymologically originated from carahiba. Africa, Latin America, Asia, Canada and the United States, Europe, Middle-East and Oceania constitute our "Roteiros ... ," [which is] defined not by a single criterion, but as a continent, economic block, or cultural regions. We are not dealing here with an expanded version of the allegories of the four continents, developed in seventeenth-century European art. The plural noun *roteiros* connotes multiple viewpoints. Contemporary challenges already indicated that it was necessary for the Bienal to develop the ability to choose. In the 1970s the idea of special rooms dedicated to the great masters in art was established. In 1996 the idea of a show composed of exhibitions of regions in the world was introduced with *Universalis*. Our challenge consisted in integrating a group of views and articulating criteria.

In the process of [assembling the exhibition] "Roteiros ...," it was necessary to define the focus. Mercator oriented the cartographic representations, nowadays widely extant, according to the position most advantageous to European eyes. We are faced with snippets of the artistic production of seven areas. The "Roteiros ..." ensemble does not seek to reduce the world to a universalist or globalizing vision, nor each region to an all-encompassing gaze. Some compare the role of the curator to that of the cartographer. In the catalog of the exhibition "Cartographies" (1992), organized by Ivo Mesquita, the critic Justo Pastor Mellado analyzes how the curator's cultural and

geographic origin denotes the approximations to the art of the Other. "Roteiros ... " would be the work of cosmographers searching for a gaze of, about or for his/her region. Two principles were established as a curatorial method: to come and go. The curators should effectively constitute their "Roteiros" by means of an experience of treading the territory for a (re)cognition of its art. After all, a key was already at hand: "Against the cabinets, the cultured practice of life," stated Oswald de Andrade in the "Manifesto of pau-brasil poetry" (1924).

During the two meetings in São Paulo, the curators consolidated points of departure and defined the final format of "Roteiros ... ." The centrifugal dialogue gave rise to objectives of complementarity, counterpoints, or confrontations, demarcation of specificities. An Internet chat between the curators coordinated by Adriano Pedrosa completed this network of relations of otherness. The curators received information about the relationship of this Bienal with the Brazilian audience, its role in the city context, and the commitments with education. In this Bienal the general reigning concept is "density," as a process of the condensation of meanings. Almost all "Roteiros ..." curators chose to pay reference to the theme of antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalism of the "Núcleo Histórico" as a working hypothesis. [...]

The architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha created solutions to respond to the installation concepts devised by the curators. The space would be conceived as a diagram of the curatorial dialogue and not as the delimitation of territories. The curators were asked to avoid the classical arrangement by rooms and to constitute a transparency that would articulate regions, artists, and works. Articulated, the "Roteiros ..." main identity. The artists would not be jumbled as in a universal group exhibition that reduced the curators' individualized experience to a sort of international commission, dissolving the gazes into a single eye. Canada and the United States and will have a dispersed presence throughout the Bienal's space.

"Roteiros ..." establishes a dialogue with Adriana Varejão's *Mapa de Lopo Homem* (*Lopo Homem's Map*). In this painting, the artist refers to the cartographic representation of that Portuguese man who in 1519 drew a map in which all continents would be united. Homem's cartographic caprice reconciled the old Ptolemaic conceptions and reaffirmed Adam's biblical role as the father of humanity, something that would only occur with this unity of the geographic horizon. *Lopo Homem* attempted to reconcile old beliefs with the trauma of knowledge. Varejão replaces the trauma. A large cut on the map in the middle of the painting exposes the viscera and the meat of the picture made with ink and suture, such a fissure with surgical material. In the face of the challenge of discontinuity and cultural contagion this painting is an emblem of the curatorial horizon of "Roteiros ..."

XXIV SÃO PAULO BIENNIAL

Márcia Fortes

Frieze, January–February 1999

The XXIV São Paulo Biennial was marked by a strong curatorial voice with an emphatic Brazilian accent. It was conceived in four segments: the traditional "National Representations," a globalized section called "Roteiros ..." ("Routes ..."), a special part dedicated to "Brazilian Contemporary Art" and a "Historical Nucleus." Turning the emphasis inward, the curators Paulo Herkenhoff and Adriano Pedrosa linked the series of shows with the idea of anthropophagy—the eating of human flesh—an apparently quintessential analogy to Brazilian cultural practice.

In 1928 the poet Oswald de Andrade's "Anthropophagite Manifesto" defined Brazilian culture as the devouring of all foreign values in order to create its own identity. To base a Biennial at the verge of a new millennium on a seventy-year-old concept may seem retroactive, but, until now, there has never been an exhibition that has realised the potential of this historic idea.

The historical section includes an impressive lineup: from Brazilian baroque sculptor Aleijadinho, the modernists Tarsila do Amaral and Alfredo Volpi, to contemporary masters Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and Cildo Meireles. Their work was exhibited alongside the work of Géricault, Goya, van Gogh, Rodin, Giacometti, Magritte, Munch, Bacon and Bourgeois. Inside this historical nucleus a few contemporary works by Brazilian artists were placed like intelligent contaminations. For example, Ernesto Neto's photograph of a female doll in a mouth and an image of Freud by Vik Muniz are included in the "Dada and Surrealism" section, and a sculpture by Tunga was inserted among paintings of indigenous natives from the seventeenth century.

Although an exhibition under a national banner no longer holds much value, the section dedicated to Brazilian contemporary art was coherent and engaging. Among the best works were Vik Muniz's witty, beautifully crafted photos of portraits made in chocolate, sugar, or carnival garbage; Sandra Cinto's graceful, painstakingly executed small drawings forming a large "tattooed" wall; Rochelle Costi's wonderfully crisp color photos of bedroom interiors; Leonilson's sentimental drawings; Tunga's photographs of twins intertwined by their long, floor-length hair; Miguel Rio Branco's poignantly romantic *Hell Diptych* (1998) photo; and Adriana Varejão's study room of paintings deconstructing Pedro Américo's nineteenth-century academic portrait of the Brazilian revolutionary Tiradentes.

One of the Biennial's highlights was Ernesto Neto's *Nave-Deusa* (1998)—an animalistic, sensual walk-in work made with stretched translucent lycra, resembling a uterus on the inside and a tent on the outside. Another was the interactive ice-skating ring, *The Very Large Ice Flow* (1998) by Olafur Eliasson. Coolly minimalist, the work seemed to flow through the glass wall of the exhibition space. Closer to the cannibalist psyche were the rough plywood, leathery gadgets and ferocious dog sounds of a haunting piece by Miroslaw Balka.

Overall, the curators established a smart dynamic in the presentation of works, avoiding the prosaic arrangement of one room per artist in favor of an open conversation

between the different exhibits. Avoiding the formality of the closed box, walls were used only when necessary and the general intermixing of works was liberating.

"Roteiros ..." also included Swiss artist Markus Raetz's visual pun sculptures; *Blind Cities* (1998) by Portuguese artist Pedro Cabrita Reis, a rugged wall installation of yellow panels, tape, Perspex, and aluminum; artist Doris Salcedo's furniture and cement pieces, with their eloquent forms and textures; Esko Manniko's panoramic photographic constructions; South African William Kentridge's echoing animation *The Return of Ulysses* (1998); and the Chinese Luo Brothers' silly but cute Pop renderings of the *World's Most Famous Brands* (1997). Also silly but cute was General Idea's *Fin de Siècle* (1990) installation of three stuffed seal pups lying amidst sheets of polystyrene.

We tend to judge biennials on the amount of fresh, novel work they showcase. Yet this becomes relative when one bears in mind that the bulk of the São Paulo audience has a good deal of catching up to do in terms of new developments in contemporary art. Nonetheless, the United States–Canada section of "Roteiros ..." felt like a bland revision of past achievements. General Idea, Michael Asher, and Sherrie Levine are hardly "thermometers of the present," as Herkenhoff claimed. Also, there were a few works that the frequent art traveler probably cannot bear to see anymore—Jeff Wall's photo panels seem ubiquitous, and Gabriel Orozco's *La DS* (1994) has clocked up almost as many miles as its Citroën engine. Yet, in Brazil, this had never been seen before, and it may well be considered a worthwhile, if overdue, arrival.

XXIV BIENAL DE SAO PAULO

Nico Israel

Artforum, February 1999

The recently concluded Bienal de São Paulo was notable both for its frequently stunning work and its elaborate theoretical apparatus. Curator Paulo Herkenhoff, assisted by Adriano Pedrosa, conceived of anthropophagy (a recurring theme of Brazilian aesthetic and cultural theory since the 1920s) as the Bienal's organizing principle. Herkenhoff suggested that such cannibalism—a model of eating and actively incorporating the other—was a novel way to reassess traditional art-historical narratives and approaches to contemporary global artistic production.

The Bienal consisted of four overlapping sections. One followed the familiar World's Fair trade-show approach, with "national" curators picking single "national" artists, as if to display their wares. Another section, entitled "Roteiros ..." ("Routes ..." repeated seven times to suggest seven continents or geographical zones), focused on what might be called the transnational imaginary—contemporary works concerned in some way with "incorporating the alien." A third section followed Brazilian art, from Brazil's response to modernism through Lygia Clark's and Helio Oiticica's groundbreaking projects in the 160s and 1970s to the often superb work undertaken by the country's young artists today. Finally, "Núcleo Historico," the most elaborate and hyped part of the show, presented a reconsideration of global art history under the sign of anthropophagy, from the sixteenth century to the end of the twentieth.

Each section had its highlights. Olafur Eliasson's icy plane, Miroslaw Balka's installation of an invisible dog pound, and Brian Maguire's project on "troubled" São Paulo youth each stood out in the "National Representations" area, though Herkenhoff's globalizing approach seemed to suggest that such nationally conceived groupings will soon be obsolete. "Roteiros ..." which presented the work of some fifty artists chosen by ten curators, was considerably more memorable, especially the excellent work by Janet Cardiff, Francis Alÿs, Moshekwa Langa, Doris Salcedo, Meyer Vaisman, and Nobuyoshi Araki. But the section devoted to contemporary Brazilian art—subdivided into two parts, "Um e Outro" ("One and Other") and "Um entre Outros" (One among others")—was undoubtedly the exhibition's real coup. "One and Other," curated by Pedrosa, featured elegant, provocative works on paper by Sandra Cinto, mixed-media works by Daniel Senise and Valeska Soares, installations by Ernesto Neto and Rivane Neuenschwander, and poignant and delicate paintings by the late Leonilson. (Cildo Meireles's red room and Beatriz Milhazes's brilliant paintings were shown in a separate area but were equally noteworthy.) These artists, well versed in art history and contemporary art theory—but not crippled by the irony or political smugness that sometimes reigns in (and reins in) their North American counterparts—deserve a much more comprehensive show.

"Núcleo Histórico" was the biennial's real disappointment. Herkenhoff invited two dozen internationally known curators to contribute works expressing their vision of what anthropophagy might mean for art. Some took the cue all too literally (Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Sons;* Bacon), others all too opaquely (van Gogh as "cannibalizing" his contemporaries? Ryman's white canvases?). The term attained a ubiquity that blunted its critical edge. Meanwhile, the "historical nucleus" closely limned the art-historical canon, as if putting a Brazilian spin on this nucleus—"contamination" is the word Herkenhoff used—were sufficient to change its atomic structure.

Given the show's scope, ambitions, and thematic (which claimed to draw from Jean-François Lyotard's conception of "density"), it is not particularly astonishing that the viewer was left with a bit of indigestion. More surprising was the hunger for more that followed. But such, perhaps, is the dense structure of desire from which anthropophagy itself arises.

REPORT FROM SÃO PAULO: CANNIBALS ALL

Edward Leffingwell

Art in America, May 1999

The near-symphonic orchestration of the 24th edition of the International Bienal of São Paulo demonstrated that in a period of rapid growth in the cultural environment of Brazil an experienced conductor working with a

talented ensemble of artists, curators, and support staff, can produce a thoughtful and engaging event worthy of an international audience of 400,000 (estimated).

That the organization of such an undertaking can be accomplished in an eighteen-month period also indicates that attention to curatorial detail and ongoing investments in the physical plant of Oscar Niemeyer's cavernous Ibirapuera Park pavilion—a glass-clad, rectilinear, "stretch" Guggenheim, devoid of Wright's esthetic intimacy, flourishes, and challenges—continue to pay off. For that matter what appeared to be examples of hubris in the making of previous Bienal publications—mammoth volumes short on comprehensible content—have refined the vision of those presently invested with responsibility for their production. The result of these factors: a complex and lively exhibition, its international and historical sections infiltrated with examples of cutting-edge Brazilian art; an engaging emphasis on Latin American art; impressive publications; and an accessible, informative Website that remarkably incorporates much of the intellectual and pictorial content of those books.

As president of the private-sector Fundação Bienal, responsible for the funding and administration of the event, Julio Landmann nominated Paulo Herkenhoff, former director of Rio de Janeiro's Museum of Modem Art, to be curatorial director of the project. Herkenhoff's mandate was to make the Bienal a window to the world for the city of São Paulo, for Brazil on the eve of its 500th anniversary, and for contemporary Latin American art in general. In addition, the Fundação emphasized education with specially conceived reference books rather than catalogs. Herkenhoff, in turn, appointed the young artist and critic Adriano Pedrosa as his adjunct curator and recruited an international team of curators who individually essayed projects. Pedrosa took responsibility for the production of the four remarkable books that serve as art-historical and critical resources, with contributions by Jean-Hubert Martin and David Elliot, among others. [...]

The notion of cultural cannibalism, as well as references to the literal deed, flourished throughout the Bienal's structure and its publications. Like the exhibition itself, the publications were designed to take advantage of interpolations of image or text that critically illustrate themes. Pedrosa and Herkenhoff refer to these as "contaminations." For example, Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, reproduced on the inside front cover of the 550-page principal volume, set forth the notion of cannibalism with its internal reference to a nineteenth-century example. It was accompanied by an appropriate quote from Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* that reads in part, "Taste this chapter, swallow this gloss." Readers are invited to similarly "devour" the catalog in their hands. And although Sherrie Levine figured prominently in the exhibition in a section with its own catalog, her black-and-white photographs from the 1994 series *After Van Gogh* were inserted on the title page of this first volume. The images represented van Gogh as a practitioner of auto-anthropophagy, in reference to the severed ear or his suicide, while Levine's work itself was being "cannibalized" in this instance.

In the climate-controlled "museological" area on the building's third floor, in the section corresponding to the catalog/reference book *Núcleo Histórico: Antropofagia e Historias de Canibalismos*, pride of place was given to Dutch painter Albert Eckhout's stunning seventeenth-century paintings from the collection of the National Museum of Denmark. Eckhout had painted four couples, represented in the exhibition and catalog by the exotic woman of each pair: an indigenous practicing cannibal ornamented with severed body parts, another reformed by impression as a farm worker, a similarly enslaved African, and a fourth portrayed as idyllic and fair through the grace of miscegenation. Eckhout seemed to be putting forth the civilizing effects of colonization, a view of the fruits of destiny, the coming together of the Americas and Africa sustained by the growth of international trade and refined by racial mixing.

The cannibalism evident in Eckhout's allegorical depictions was central to the curatorial focus on anthropophagy as a proper Brazilian theme throughout the Bienal. Tarsila do Amaral's association with the Anthropophagite movement shifted the act of cannibalism to its cultural equivalent, the devouring of artistic influences. In 1923, the artist turned from Paris-based studies in Cubism and produced a truly Brazilian modern painting, A Negra, embodying the historic presence of Africa in modem Brazil in the generous figure of a subject portrayed against the geometric abstraction of the landscape beyond. In this painting and others of the period, Tarsila (as she is familiarly known in the casual Brazilian manner) initiates Brazilian modernism, engages in a systematic attempt to separate Brazil from the standards of the nineteenth-century salon, forgoes imitation of European cultural models, and provides a climate for the discovery and development of an independent Brazilian art. [...]

There was little missing from the menu of this Bienal season, with the exception, perhaps, of such cannibals as Carolee Schneemann, Ana Mendieta, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Hermann Nitsch, Paul Thek, and Damien Hirst. And yet they, and many other artists, seem to have participated by invocation, as though the very thought of them was necessarily a ramification of this triumphant curatorial event. Exhibitions earlier this year at the Museum of London and at the Kunsthal Rotterdam, focusing on human remains, may appear in retrospect as heirs to this anthropophagite banquet. Perhaps such projects are, instead, the product of the approach of the millennium, attempts to rationalize the imponderable nature of cultural history as a construction. In any case, in the year 2000, São Paulo will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Bienal, in its 25th edition, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Brazil.

25

EXHIBITION

Documenta 11

LOCATION

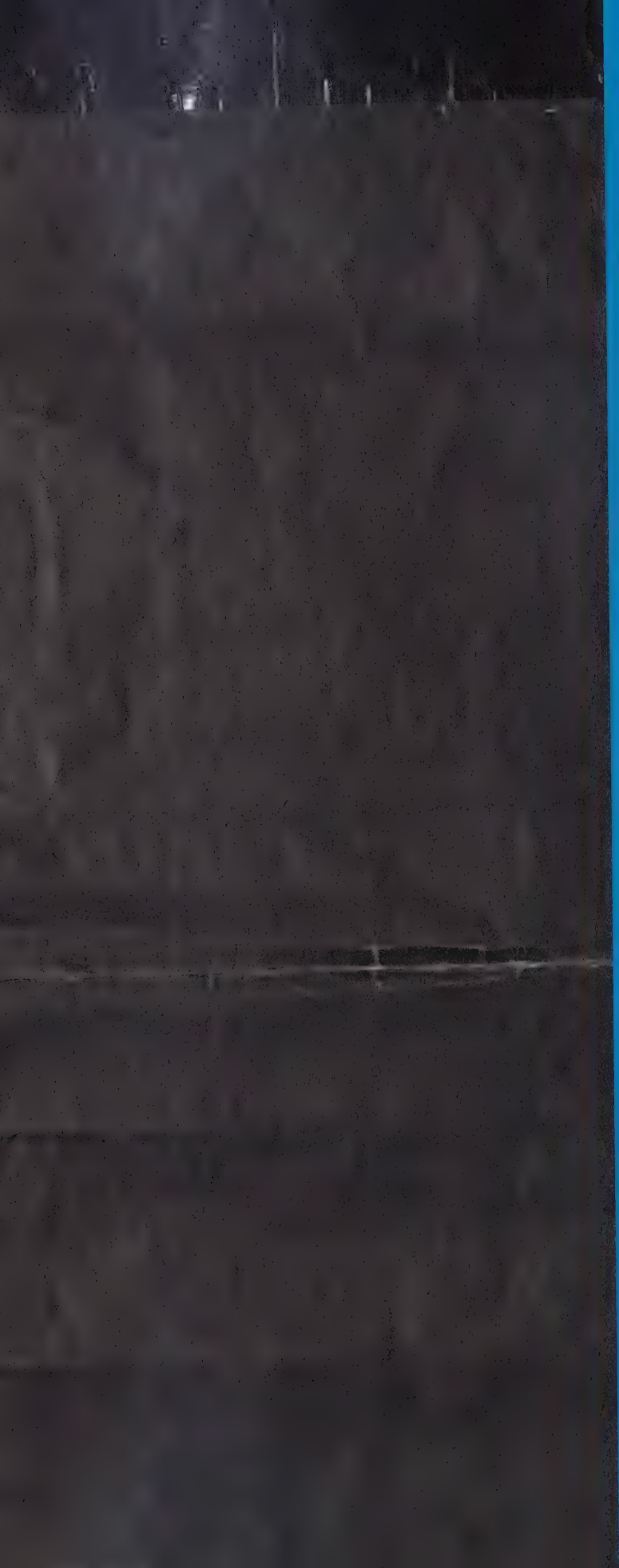
Binding-Brauerei, documenta-Halle, Kulturbahnhof, Museum Fridericianum, and Orangerie / Karlsaue, Kassel

DATE

8 June–
15 September
2002

CURATORS

Okwui Enwezor with co-curators Sarat Maharaj, Octavio Zaya, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Suzanne Ghez and Mark Nash



ARTISTS

Georges Adéagbo, Ravi Agarwal, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Chantal Akerman, Gaston André Ancelovici (Colectivo Cine-Ojo), Farwell Armaly, Michael Ashkin, Asymptote Architecture, Kutlug Ataman, The Atlas Group (Walid Ra'ad), Julia & Stacy Levy Bargman, Artur Barrio, Berad & Hila Bachar, Zarina Bhimji, Black Audio Film Collective, John Bock, Ecke Bonk, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Louise Bourgeois, Stanley Brouwn, Tania Bruguera, Luis Camnitzer, James Coleman, Constant (Constant A. Nieuwenhuys), Hanne Darboven, Destiny Deacon, Stan Douglas, Cecilia Edefalk, William Eggleston, Maria Eichhorn, Touhami Enniadre, Cerith Wyn Evans, Feng Mengbo, Chohreh Feyzdjou, Yona Friedman, Meschac Gaba, Giuseppe Gabellone, Carlos Garaicoa, Kendell Geers, Isa Genzken, Jef Geys, David Goldblatt, Jean Galub, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Renée Green, Victor Grippo, Le Groupe Amos, Jens Haaning, Mona Hatoum, Thomas Hirschhorn, Candida Höfer, Craigie Horsfield, Huit FaceMe: Dynamique Artistique & Culturelle, Pierre Huyghe, Igloolik Isuma Productions, Alfredo Jaar, Joan Jonas, Isaac Julien, Amar Kanwar, On Kawara, William Kentridge, Johan van der Keuken, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Ben Kinmont, Svetlana & Igor Kopystiansky, Glenn Ligon, Kan Lum, Mark Manders, Fabian Marcaccio, Steve McQueen, Gildo Mauréles, Jonas Mekas, Annette Messager, Ryuji Miyamoto, Santu Mofokeng, Multiplicity, Juan Muñoz, Shirin Neshat, Gabriel Orozco, Olumuyiwa Olamide Osifuye, Ulrike Ottinger, Ouattara Watts, ParkFiction, Manfred Pernice, Raymond Pettibon, Adrian Piper, Lisl Ponger, Pere Portabella, RAQS Media Collective, Alejandra Riera and Doina Petrescu, Dieter Roth, Dans Salcedo, Seifollah Samadian, Gilles Saussier, Allan Sekula, Yinka Shonibare, Andreas Siekmann, Simparch, Lorna Simpson, Eyal Sivan, David Small, Fiona Tan, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Jean-Marie Teno, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Isuuami.net, Joëlle Tuerlinckx, Luc Tuymans, Nomeda & Gediminas Urbonas, Jeff Wall, Nari Ward, Yang Fu Dong

CATALOG

Documenta11_Platform 5. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Documenta11_Platform 1: Democracy Unrealized; Documenta11_Platform 2: Experiments with Truth; Documenta11_Platform 3: Créolité and Creolization; Documenta11_Platform 4: Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001–2002

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Number of artists: 116
Number of artworks: 450
Total attendance: 651,000

Through both its content and structure, Documenta 11 was the culmination of a period of artworld expansion beyond Europe and North America. The thematics of works centered on globalization, and the exhibition itself consisted of five successive events held in four continents over eighteen months. With this innovative format the show extended the discursive mode of the previous Documenta, bringing the resources of many fields to bear on its central concerns. While criticized as ignoring art for didactic documentation, Documenta 11 operated with a different conception of the role of artworks within the overall exhibition.

The artistic director was Okwui Enwezor, a Nigerian-American critic and curator who was the first non-white and first non-European head of Documenta. He worked with a six-member team of international curators, although team members did not each assemble individual shows as consulting curators had done five years before in Enwezor's Second Johannesburg Biennial. At the Documenta 11 press conference, Enwezor spoke of his exhibition as "diagnostic," investigating current political, social and cultural conditions of the globalized postcolonial world. For this enterprise visual art was one of many tools, employed along with other cultural forms and analytic disciplines. The director of Documenta X, Catherine David, had promoted a similar perspective in 1997 with a program of talks by figures from multiple fields, "100 Days—100 Guests." More than a supplement to the art, these sessions were held to be essential parts of the research project that was Documenta. Enwezor incorporated this approach in a more fundamental way by expanding the spatial and temporal parameters of the conventional exhibition. Rather than consisting solely of an exhibition of artworks mounted for 100 days, Documenta 11 was composed of five "Platforms," the last being the presentation in Kassel. The two-part Platform 1 was held in Vienna and Berlin on the subject of democracy, Platform 2 in New Delhi on justice and reconciliation, Platform 3 was a meeting in St. Lucia of fifteen writers on creolization, and Platform 4 convened in Lagos to discuss urban Africa. Platform 5 took its place alongside these events as an equivalent element of the whole, its participants engaged in a parallel project conducted in a different language, that of visual art.

As is not surprising for a show concerned with social and political issues, there was a great deal of film and video, much of it documentary. It was estimated that to see it all would take 600 hours. Virtually all of Platform 5 was installed in Kassel's four large exhibition facilities, with a few outdoor works in Karlsaue Park. Among the almost eighty special commissions, only Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* was far from the center, in a poor Turkish-German housing project. At the primary exhibition sites the display was quite traditional, despite the radical nature of Documenta 11's overall conception, with most artists presented individually in white box galleries. There was substantial representation of artists from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, and work by artist collectives. But the show was not dominated by the very young: the average age of the artists was fifty-two.

Punctuated by September 11, 2001, and with the dysfunctions of globalization as a central concern, Documenta 11 marks the end of the optimistic, expansive era of postcolonial and post-Cold War international exhibitions. Still increasing in number and continuing as sites of curatorial experimentation, "peripheral" biennials were now fully knit into the international art system. While signifying the end of one period, Documenta 11 pointed to another, for its platform structure extended and deepened the discursive turn introduced by Documenta X, encouraging a rethinking of what an exhibition could be and leading toward a new direction in exhibition-making.

Catalogue

↖ Catalog for *Documenta 11 Platform 5*.

↑ *Documenta 11 Platform 5* catalog, with photomontage showing TV screens with images of the events of 11 September 2011.

← The curatorial team of Documenta 11 included (left to right) Carlos Basualdo, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Okwui Enwezor, Ute Meta Bauer, Octavio Zaya, and Mark Nash.

→ Ken Lum's *Mirror Maze with 12 Signs of Depression*, with the Kassel Orangerie visible in the background.

↓ While previous editions of Documenta had invested heavily in outdoor pieces, there were fewer at Documenta 11. Renée Green's *Standardized Octagonal Units for Imagined and Existing Systems* were pavilions made of metal frames and colored cloth that stood in the park in front of the Orangerie, in which multimedia displays evoked imagined countries and cultures.

↘ John Bock's *Gribbohm II b*, a series of public rehearsals, concerts, lectures, events, and action pieces.

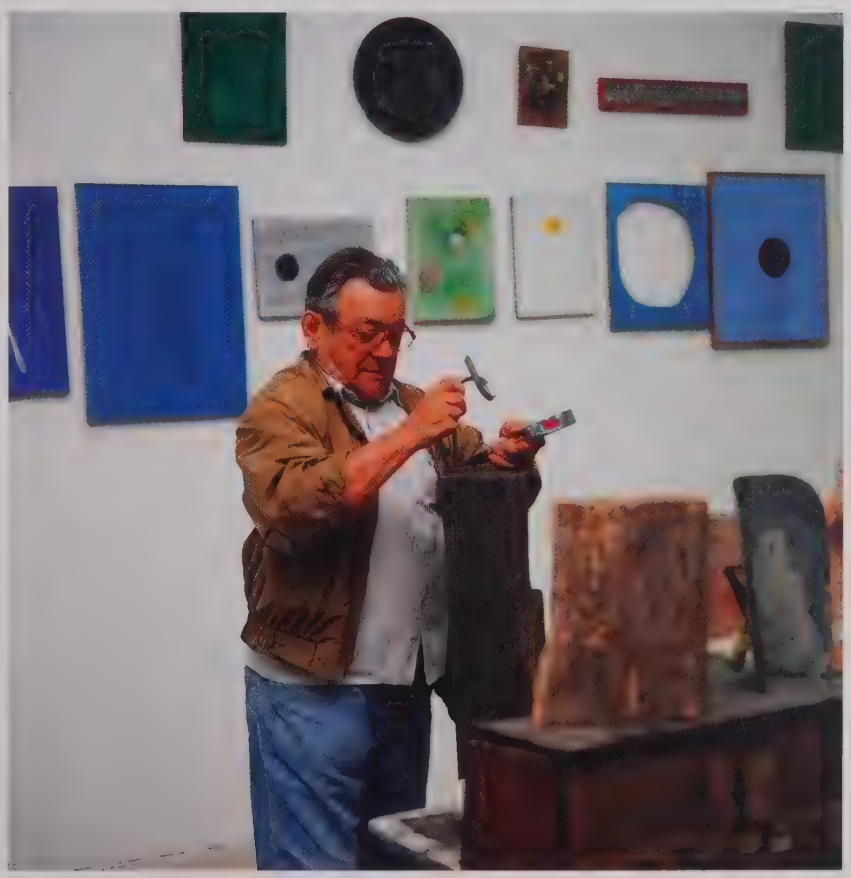
← Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille-Monument*, a project centered on a Turkish neighborhood of Kassel. It consisted of a number of different elements and structures, including an outdoor "sculpture"; a library of works by surrealist author Georges Bataille and a "Bataille Exhibition"; a food bar; a shuttle service delivering people from the main Documenta site to the site of the sculpture; a television show that broadcast daily programs on Kassel's public-access channel; and a website with webcams showing live feeds from different parts of the *Bataille Monument*.

↓ The library in Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille-Monument*.

↓↓ The shuttle car service that was part of Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille-Monument*.

↑ Mona Hatoum's *Homebound*, an installation of household objects interconnected by a network of wires that were electrified at regular intervals.

→ The eighty-one-year-old Croatian artist Ivan Kozaric presented an installation of his studio at the Binding Brewery.



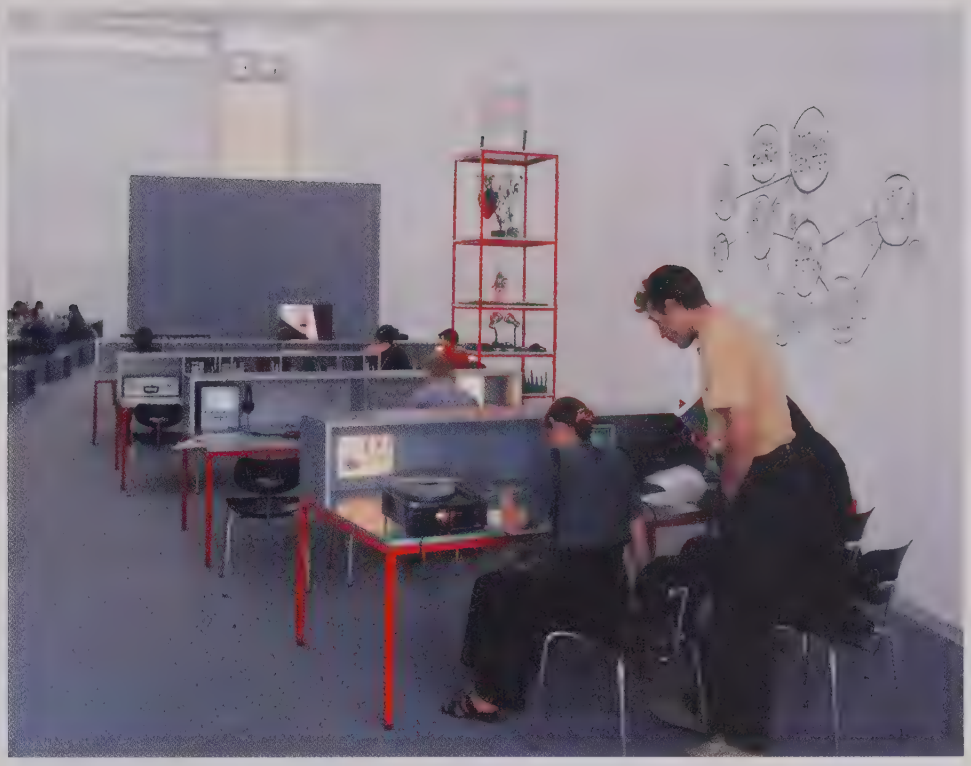
← Pascale Marthine Tayou's *Game Station.*

↓ Pascale Marthine Tayou's *Game Station*, an array of television sets screening images of street life in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

→ View of Park Fiction's archival installation at the documenta-Halle.

↓ Raqs Media Collective's *Co-ordinates 28.8N 77.15E*, an installation using video screens, sound, print, and stickers. "In listing a set of latitude and longitude measurements, bracketed by two calendar years, this installation names a city called Delhi and a time that feels like the first two years of the twenty-first century. In doing so, the syntax of space-time co-ordinates also connects the city as a location to the abstractions of other spaces and times." — statement by Raqs Media Collective.

↘ Fareed Armaly's installation, *From/To*, was a grid pattern pasted to the floor of the documenta-Halle, in the style of a schematic map of the Palestinian Territories. While it appeared to be a map, the pattern was actually the result of a digital rendering of the surface of a stone, which for Armaly is a symbol of architecture and the world, as well as an object that can be used as a weapon. Together with the Palestinian filmmaker Rashid Masharawi, Armaly also presented a multi-media work related to the region.

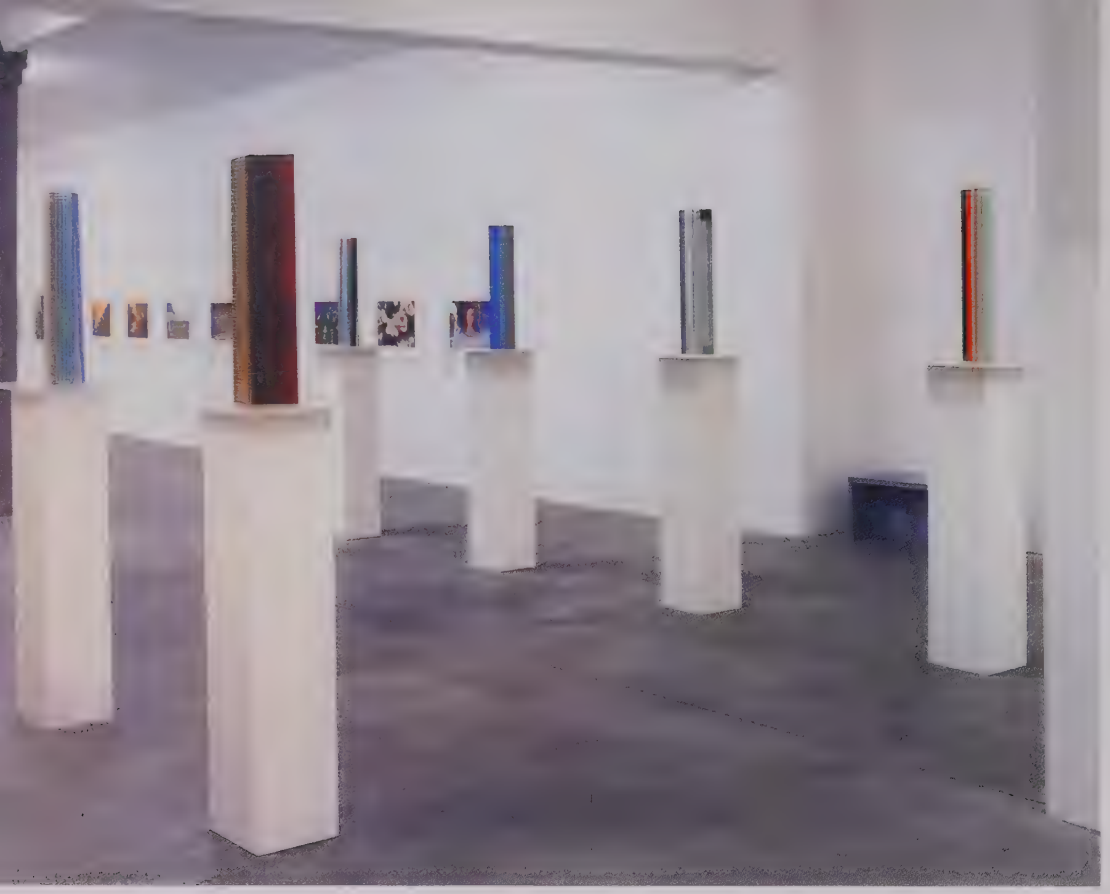


← Meshac Gaba's *Museum of Contemporary African Art: Library*, a collection of the artist's books and old computers running on bike-powered electricity.

↓ View inside the documenta-Halle with (from left) Meshac Gaba's *Museum of Contemporary African Art: Library*, and the collective Park Fiction's documentation of a community's reclamation of urban space in Hamburg.

↑ Installation view of Frédéric Bruly Bouabré's *Alphabet Bété*, a series of 449 drawings with ballpoint pen and colored pencils on cardboard.

→ Detail of Yinka Shonibare's *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation*, which consists of a wheeled carriage, a suitcase, and headless mannequins dressed in costumes that combine eighteenth-century European and contemporary African fashion. The work partly references the Grand Tour, an extended European cultural trip undertaken by young gentlemen in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, suggesting that it was a kind of covert sexual tourism (adultery was called "criminal conversation" at the time.)



← Isa Genzken's *New Buildings for Berlin*, at the Kulturbahnhoff.

↓ Bodys Isek Kingelez's *Kimbembele Ihunga (Kimbeville)*, at the Kulturbahnhof.

THE BLACK BOX

Okwui Enwezor

Documenta 11_Platform 5 (exh. cat.)

INTRODUCTION

Although preparation and research began nearly four years ago, it is nonetheless permissible to say that the discursive drive of Documenta 11 will never see its conclusion in the spectacular spaces filled with art projects that the exhibition offers to visitors to Kassel. The exhibition, despite its ambition, scale, and complexity, and the sheer heterogeneity of the forms, images, and positions that encompass its far-reaching vision, is not to be understood as a terminus for understanding the wide-ranging disciplinary models spelled out in the first four Platforms of conferences, debates, and workshops that preceded it in five locations, in Europe (Vienna and Berlin), Asia (New Delhi), the Americas (St. Lucia), and Africa (Lagos). [...]

PLATFORM 1: DEMOCRACY UNREALIZED

[...] The project "Democracy Unrealized" represents a questioning inversion of the theories and institutional policies that have defined the field of democracy as essentially realized. In the series of debates, presentations, and workshops organized within the purview of the project, philosophers, political theorists, historians, activists, and students present imaginative and wide-ranging interpretations and arguments that assert that even if democracy has been the watchword for different kinds of participatory governance and political systems of the last half century, to a large degree it remains a project under constant reinvention. The notion "unrealized" alluded to in the title of the project is a way to interpret the varied modifications that the ethic of democracy and its institutional forms have undergone and continue to undergo today, making democracy a fundamentally unrealizable project, or put another way, a work in progress.

PLATFORM 2: EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH: TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND THE PROCESSES OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The last two decades have witnessed a series of juridical inquiries and conflicts—as well as political and social assessments all over the world that have considered the nature of state impunity—from which have arisen overwhelming cases of genocide and gross human-rights violations. While the expressibility of the law is mostly concerned with the legality of the state, its actions, and the individuals acting within it (a central thesis of the Nuremberg trials and Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem), the "truth commissions" that have recently emerged in the lexicon of the search for answers to genocide and state repression seek to engage the dimension of the cultural, the social, and the political as spaces of collective bargaining within civil society.

What comes after violence and after the collapse of the state? Where does the horizon of culture and civility lie after state impunity and the termination of authoritarian rule and fascism? How are human rights to be fashioned in the wake of the unaccountable power of a radical force that displaces, decapitates, dehumanizes, and destroys? What guarantees these rights? These questions, among many others, converge in ordering the central problematic that structures "Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation." The project looks at two normative interpretations of justice and their political, cultural, and social corollary attending the mechanisms of prosecution, testimony, witnessing, political liberalization, and social transformation in the last half century. The second part of the project considers the historical work that has emerged from the study of these commissions and the philosophical and political theories, as well as the artistic and cultural responses that have accompanied their formation. [...]

PLATFORM 3: CRÉOLITÉ AND CREOLIZATION

Two points define the theme of this platform. First: in terms of its poetics, créolité is to be understood as a critical theory of creole language, literary form, and mode of producing locality. The locality that envelops this language is, of course, the Caribbean. However, this does not capture the entire complexity around which creole is situated, that is, if we extend its geographical character beyond the borders of the Caribbean. But for the moment let us just imagine the Caribbean as the locus of its international projection to other branches of creole linguistics—in Africa, the Indian Ocean Islands, South America, and even the United States. The founding text of this critical theory as a literary form is expressed in a manifesto, "*Éloge de la créolité*" ("In Praise of Creoleness"), published in 1989 by three Martinican intellectuals, Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphael Confiant. In their controversial text, the three writers underline their intervention: firstly, by furnishing it with a name: and secondly, by designating its intertextual dimension as "a sort of mental envelope in the middle of which our world will be built in full consciousness of the outer world." In this "mental envelope," the writers conceive of their cultural world as emerging out of the world of colonial domination into one of "*nontotalitarian consciousness of a preserved diversity* [italics in original]." The critical gesture and expression of this diversity is at the heart of, the radical discourse of *créolité*, especially as it concerns the question of what it means to live and work from the polycentrism of the Caribbean. In this context Creoleness emerges in the scissions and agglutinations forged in the contact zone of its historical transmission, i.e., "Creoleness [as] the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history."

The second part of the thematic is concerned with defining creolization as a process of emergence of a world culture conceived from the perspective of radical cultural and situational flux. More than five hundred years separates us from the first arrival of slaves in the New World. Slavery and colonialism as the Janus-faced projects of European imperialism and the global

institutionalization of capitalism today define an array of configurations through which to understand the paradigms of mixing and hybridization that underpin such concepts as modern culture, identity formation, language, ethnicity, and race. Creole societies have their roots in the institutions of slavery and colonialism and mark the intersections where modern subjectivity and historical processes meet. In recent years, through waves of migration and displacements, creolization has emerged as a dominant modality of contemporary living practices, shaping patterns of dwelling that are crossed and differentiated by massive flows of images and cultural symbols expressed through material culture and language. [...]

PLATFORM 4. UNDER SIEGE: FOUR AFRICAN CITIES: FREETOWN, JOHANNESBURG, KINSHASA, LAGOS

This platform represents an attempt to foreground the dimension of global formations that animate the study of urban systems as a category of spatial relations and ecologies of sustainability from which are derived a set of imperatives toward development and modernization.

The loci of this study are the urban systems of four African cities which over the last two decades have witnessed increased population growth, migration, and the pressures of fragile urban governance, and state and economic collapse. That African cities are fragile urban systems is without a doubt; however, the conventional wisdom that describes them as unsustainable, chaotic, and unmanageable fails to understand the inventive dynamism out of which their urban residents have written new texts of resilience, survival, and growth.

In the study of these four cities, a number of issues have emerged. The first is the degree to which informality—sometimes constituting as much as 70 percent of all functioning institutions—has shaped the nature of activities governing many sectors, and also mediates all relations (economic, cultural, social, political, and civic) where the State no longer plays a dominant role. The second issue is premised on a contradiction: one that simultaneously underwrites these urban systems as conurbations of multiple crises and obsolescence, but also as inventive systems of creativity, vitality, and dynamism. The third aspect of the survival strategy of city inhabitants—understood here as coextensive with rural, traditional, indigenous, and familial practices—is the expanded role of women in the production of new types of subjective practices that have consolidated their role as important players in the shaping of urban imaginaries. A fourth point relates to the catastrophic effects of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Structural Adjustment Program policies of the 1980s across Africa. SAP (as it is popularly known and explicitly translated by Africans in terms of its effects on their lives) overnight destroyed the middle class and dramatically increased poverty, destroyed value, and limited productivity. The fifth conclusion relates to the effects of State collapse (Johannesburg linked to the demise of apartheid, Freetown and Kinshasa with civil conflict, and Lagos with a pernicious dictatorship) on the stability of the cities' urban economies. [...]

PLATFORM 5. PASSAGES THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXHIBITION

ENCYCLOPEDIA-CONSTRUCTION

—emergence of the social and political; the city as a modern manifestation of transnationality, sociality, and transindividuality; the city as an incarnation of a postnational, identitarian model of citizenship—MIRROR-REFLECTION—the domain of spectatorship and the carnivalesque; level of the individual and society; the constitution of the individual as subject, popular sovereignty, difference—

Nearly fifteen years of unrelenting neoconservative attacks have weakened the political and cultural base within which artists have expressed—via modes of popular sovereignty and difference and through an engaged critique and self-reflexivity, especially in the strategies of many artistic positions—the multicultural and postcolonial nature of modern and contemporary culture. Here is not the space to debate the merits or failures of multiculturalism, feminism, or minority-rights movements; or to answer back to the pernicious dismissal of postcoloniality that is so prevalent in academic forums, media, and politics. I only wish to remark that contemporary art institutions have often been defined as the most enlightened and liberal of all cultural institutions working on the global stage. In the 1980s, the movements of multiculturalism, feminism, and gay rights forced new debates that sought to decolonize long-standing resistance to reform by major institutions. In the context of the contemporary art sphere, expanded opportunities that came through the discourses of multiculturalism and difference brought about a new visibility in the participation of minorities and women, consequently redrawing the borders of institutional and gallery systems. However, in the 1990s there was a change of course, which slowly and systematically eroded what had been a healthy, vigorous environment of debate. [...]

But to make an exhibition of art, I would insist on the proposition that spectatorship is central and fundamental to all forms of valuation of the visual content of an exhibition. Spectatorship is that dimension of subjectivity and consciousness that defines the relation of power to acts of cognition and valuation. Spectatorship, which takes the carnivalesque as its mode of enunciation, can only function productively in a democratic, open system. Here, I am mostly interested in the kind of democratic spirit whose referent is constituted by the degree to which a plethora of institutions—formal and informal, public and private—rather than mediating all aspects of popular sovereignty, make room within their regimes for the experimental, the imperfect and unfinished. Such recognition connects artistic practice to notions such as community and citizenship. In the democratic system, which is to be distinguished from popular politics, but is rather one that promotes agency over pure belief, the demands of citizenship place strong ethical constraints on the artist based on his or her commitment to all "forms-of-life." The practice of art presents the artist with the task of making such commitment. [...]

AFTERWORD

Despite their proliferation, institutions such as museums and large-scale international exhibitions cannot on their own define the legitimacy of contemporary art today; rather, they are caught up in reshaping their own legitimacy as a consequence of their delayed recognition of the complex topos of the new global community. Therefore, from the outset, the project of Documenta 11 was conceived not as an exhibition but as a constellation of public spheres. The public sphere of the exhibition gesture, implicit in the historical formation of Documenta, in which art comes to stand for models of representation and narratives of autonomous subjectivity, is rearticulated here as a new understanding in the domain of the discursive rather than the museological. Documenta 11's paradigm is shaped by forces that seek to enact the multidisciplinary direction through which artistic practices and processes come most alive, in those circuits of knowledge produced outside the predetermined institutional domain of Westernism, or those situated solely in the sphere of artistic canons.

If the Platforms were a compendium, a constitutive map of contemporary knowledge circuits, art; theory, science, culture, ecology; spatiality and temporality, urban systems, locality, globality; institutional formations (informal and formal), metaterritory, experience—albeit always incomplete, discontinuous, forever requiring qualification, elaboration, and continuous enunciation—then each phase of staging the discursive potentialities of the engagement between artistic practice and social reality, theoretical reflection and political systems, forms-of-life and image economies, advanced technology and local industries, confronts us with a world of vast displacements and deterritorialized understanding of culture. In the process of its composition, the exhibition stands for the rigor, precision, courage, vision, power, freedom, agency, openness, and imagination of the individual statement as it opens to changes wrought by global transformations. These individual statements and sometimes-individuated units connect to and overlap with each other. The demands placed on each component and composition require that they each complete, complicate, and reveal that which is deliberately masked, distanced, and effaced in others.

The Platforms signify journeys of experience and methods for thinking the global at the height of its own reconstitution. Within their individual formats, there is no need to make a polemic of globalism, multiculturalism, and difference; the wider scope of the project assumes them as already part of the complex weave of tongues, the tide of voices that will activate the final meaning of its dramatization. The collected result in the form of a series of volumes and the exhibition is placed at the dialectical intersection of contemporary art and culture. Such an intersection equally marks the liminal limits out of which the postcolonial, post-Cold War, post-ideological, transnational, deterritorialized, diasporic, global world has been written. This dialectical enterprise attempts to establish concrete and imaginative links within the various projects of modernity. Their impact, as well as their material and symbolic ordering, is woven through procedures of translation, interpretation, subversion, hybridization, creolization, displacement, and reassemblage. What emerges in this transformation in different parts of the world produces a critical ordering of intellectual and artistic networks of the globalizing world. The exhibition as a diagnostic toolbox actively seeks to stage the relationships, conjunctions, and disjunctions between different realities: between artists, institutions, disciplines, genres, generations, processes, forms, media, activities; between identity and subjectification. Linked together the exhibition counterpoises the supposed purity and autonomy of the art object against a rethinking of modernity based on ideas of transculturality and extraterritoriality. Thus, the exhibition project of the fifth Platform is less a receptacle of commodity-objects than a container of a plurality of voices, a material reflection on a series of disparate and interconnected actions and processes.

DOCUMENTA 11

Kobena Mercer

Frieze, September 2002

Among the other images charting the utopian aspirations that have animated the city's garden festivals and international art exhibitions alike, the music of Alice Coltrane emanated from several pavilions in the Karlsaue park. And on a screen that appeared to have sprouted out of the ground were a jam jar full of dust from the World Trade Center and a quotation—"Small pleasures must correct great tragedies"—from the history of landscape gardening that Vita Sackville-West wrote when she created her garden at Sissinghurst in the 1940s.

Where there is much in contemporary art that baulks at the idea that art must "do" anything, let alone respond to great tragedies, Documenta 11 put forward a carefully composed survey of art that is engaged with the lived experience of the material world. What distinguished this Documenta was not so much the wide-ranging selection of artists from all over the globe as the way in which its outward-looking approach to internationalism was installed as a background feature, throwing the curators' specific conceptual interests more sharply into relief. The exhibition made a convincing case for a view of contemporary art as exploring a genuinely diverse range of social and material conditions, despite the sometimes cumbersome language in which the artistic director, Okwui Enwezor, declared his aim of highlighting the kinds of "knowledge" produced in the visual arts, on a par with philosophy or science.

Although Enwezor may have been hyped as delivering the "multicultural Documenta," or "the postcolonial Documenta," the outcome was an emphatically ideas-driven event that had much in common with the overtly intellectual aims of Catherine David's Documenta X. Since inclusivity itself has become increasingly commonplace in the art world, certainly since 1997, Documenta 11's "spectacular difference," as Enwezor put it in the giant catalog-cum-encyclopedia, did not lie primarily in the exhibition's generous sense of geography.

More significant was the scale of the underlying ambition to stage a critical "project" in a public arena: the exhibition was presented as the fifth "platform" in a series of public symposia held around the world over the past eighteen months.

In this sense, the overall thrust of Enwezor's initiative was to redress the past exclusions carried out by "Westernism." This far-reaching and almost utopian desire to make a case for contemporary art that responds to, even if it cannot redeem, the tragedies of history is very much in keeping with the whole tradition of Documenta. Eager to point out that the exhibition should not be seen as embodying grand conclusions, the show's critique of familiar adversaries—the museum, the canon, the avant-garde—was nevertheless an attempt to update the interaction between art and politics that was itself the motivating force behind numerous Western avant-gardes. Having rejected a chronological arrangement of material, co-curator Carlos Basualdo said the city was chosen as a spatial model for the exhibition because of the open-ended connections or passageways Documenta's audience might encounter as they moved between the works. Regarding the second half of the twentieth-century as a period in which the West has had to come to terms with the long-range consequences of modernity, Basualdo's evocation of "the city as garden of memory" could be seen as revisiting the flowers-in-the-ruins model that Arnold Bode put forward when he first placed modern sculptures in front of the devastated Orangerie in the aftermath of World War II.

Alongside the significant emphasis on documentary, spatial topography was one of Documenta 11's clearest overall themes. Zarina Bhimji's film *Out of Blue* (2002) was a searing portrait of the Ugandan landscape the artist left behind when her family was among those expelled by Idi Amin in the early 1970s. The dry facture of Leon Golub's paintings, next door, had brushstrokes like the tire tracks on the runway at Entebbe airport. While Destiny Deacon grappled with similar experiences of enforced separation, as did Croatian film-maker Sandja Ivekovic in *Personal Cuts* (1982), the sequence of places that unfolded in Bhimji's film was devoid of people but invested with a feeling for what could be called the postcolonial Sublime. [...]

CAPTURING THE PRESENT?

Jean-Paul Martinon
Journal of Visual Culture, 2002

There is something fundamentally exhausting about Documenta 11, the transnational, interdisciplinary, and transgenerational large-scale exhibition curated by Okwui Enwezor and his team of six international curators over eighteen months, across five platforms, four continents, involving more than eighty transmigrating multimedia artists and transdisciplinary scholars and part of which is displayed for a hundred days in Kassel in five different buildings, including a stylistically heterogeneous new Brewery.

The exhaustion does not come from the show itself. The exhibition is curatorially safe. Documenta 11 does not in any way problematize traditional exhibition models for this kind of global middle-class tourist attraction: works are neatly displayed on museum plinths and in white cubes, everything is hung at eye level, wall labels give the name of the artist and the title of the work, everything is crowd- and child-friendly. Easy. Although it is a show with various platforms, it never allows for the unformed, for the curatorially unresolved. It might display, in neat frames and printed panels, social and cultural processes and political agendas, but it never allows the presentation or the curatorial process itself to become a working process *without end*. It might be aware that we live in a moment of incredible instability, but it never allows for what is unsure to be exposed. One moves nicely from black to white cube and back again into a black cube only to reappear yet again into another unsurprisingly bright white cube with objects on plinths and two-dimensional works on walls. Nothing is chaotic or perverse. It might pretend to present counter-models that allow us to see the sheer complexity of what we grapple with when we talk about globalization, but it never actualizes on site these counter-models: the show presents great art and great documents by singular artists, collectives and art networks in a curatorially dead safe museum realm.

One of the curators, Carlos Basualdo, writes in the catalog that the show proposes a model of articulation that is architectonic and urban, situationist, even psychogeographic, in which all the paths fork endlessly. The problem is that the show generates so many leaflets and maps that it is impossible to get truly lost in Kassel. One might move from Lapland to Benin by just taking a few steps, but one is still in a museum in the middle of Germany. Jan Hoet and Catherine David's previous Documentas were physically and curatorially more challenging in that they invited artists to take on various urban and non-urban spaces in the city center. In a way, it was them who truly urbanized the museological space of Documenta, not this world map of art production. In this way, seeing the show might take some local globe-trotting time, but is not unfeasible or particularly tiresome.

The exhaustion does not even set in after reading the 2,462 pages that have been published for the occasion (eight volumes). The costly 3.5 kg [7 1/2 pounds] catalogue for the show itself (Platform 5, the main volume) is a coffee-table book with plenty of images and explanatory texts. Imagine flicking through a hardback copy of a world-class 600-page volume of *Hello!* with the added bonus of proper writing. Lovely, scholarly, entertaining, but essentially stately, decorous and downright conventional in its layout and scope. The exhaustion sets in because it tries to present something altogether unfathomable, which I will characterize here as the immanental threshold of the present.

This is not at first evident. Indeed, on the surface, the show tries to articulate the increasingly accelerated processes of cultural syncretism. The exhibition began with a series of literal deterritorializations (Platforms 1 to 4) which emblematize the mechanisms that make the space of contemporary art one of multiple ruptures: planes, buses, trams,

trains, taxis, hotels, restaurants, cappuccinos in between Vienna, Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, Lagos, and Kassel. In between these ruptures, the team of Documenta 11 tried to invent new models enabling transdisciplinary actions within the contemporary global public sphere; they tried to mark the location of culture today and the spaces in which culture intersects with the domains of complex global knowledge circuits; they attempted to put forward a new reading of *creolization* as a theory of creative disorder that analyzes active urban and contact zones in flux; they endeavored to map the geography of many cultural territories; they addressed hybridity, *métissage*, cosmopolitanism, the polycentric and polysemic aspects of a new political philosophy of the Other, the polymorphous, the chaotic logic of postcolonial cities, the signs and codes of expression of new urban identities, the emergence of "knowledge production" in lieu of the old notion of art and the spaces of the critical debates of contemporary artistic discourses today. [...]

To attempt to make sense of this diversity in a groundbreaking blockbuster show is to reveal the fundamental contradiction of Documenta 11: on the one hand to evade totalizing narratives and on the other to revert to the belief that time and space can be pinned down, that modes of knowledge can make sense in Kassel, Lagos, or at a private party at Derek Walcott's house in St. Lucia. In this way, despite all their efforts, the show succumbs to one last utopia, that of capturing the immanental threshold of the infinitely complex passing of time on earth. This is evident when analyzing the curators' use of words. In this review, I have grafted numerous words encountered in the catalogue and other various press documents. These words all start with the prefix "trans-," which etymologically (in Latin) means "across," "beyond," "through," so as to change. The recurrent use of this prefix in words, such as transitions, transformations, transnational, transgenerational, transmigrating, transdisciplinary, etc. highlights that what is addressed at Documenta 11 is what exposes or moves from one state to another, permanently. An unfathomable fleetingness that ultimately one can only acquiesce as passing by. An impermanence that either in Benin or in Bhutan one can only say yes to. A global transitoriness that ultimately will never ever make sense. The meaninglessness that comes when facing the absolute inarticulateness of the present is precisely what is missing from this show. A few pointless, aimless, foolish and insecure attitudes from both the curators and some of the artists would have revealed not only the horror of our helplessness in front of some conflicts worldwide, but also the essentially human aspect of such an ambitious exhibition.

A NEW WORLD ART? DOCUMENTING DOCUMENTA 11

Stewart Martin
Radical Philosophy,
November–December 2003

Documenta 11 was one of the most radically conceived events in the history of postcolonial art practice. It is exemplary of the influence of postcolonial discourses on critical art practice over the last twenty years in breaking profoundly with the colonial presuppositions of the nineteenth-century tradition of ethnographic or anthropological exhibitions of non-Western art as primitive culture. It exhibited contemporary art from across the globe in accordance with a profound critique of the orientalism and neocolonialism that this task faces, which in many respects went beyond that of previous landmark shows, such as the 1989 "Magiciens de la Terre" in Paris, or the 1993 Whitney Biennial in New York. It presents a watershed in the history of Documenta—one of the pre-eminent exhibitions of contemporary art, held in Kassel, Germany, every five years—the first to be curated by a non-European, with an unprecedented presence of artists from outside Europe and North America, and an extensive transformation of Documenta's geographical and intellectual constitution. However, despite predictably extensive coverage, the critical reception of Documenta 11 so far has been severely delimited. [...]

It is evident that Documenta 11 remains entwined in the legacies of a heritage of radical avant-garde artistic practice in a number of complex ways, many of which it conceals from itself. With respect to [Peter] Bürger's influential distinction between historical and neo-avant-gardes, Documenta 11 is ambivalent. On the one hand, like the neo-avant-gardes, it proposes a radical revolution in the institutions of art, while presupposing them in various ways. Documenta 11 is proposed as the *détournement* of the spectacular visibility of Documenta, in order to pursue a destructive critique of Documenta. But this is par for the course for contemporary exhibiting. Otherwise, let's face it, Documenta wouldn't have let it happen. However, like the historical avant-gardes, Documenta 11 is conceived in conjunction with a radical political project that promises a dramatic transformation of social relations. Moreover, it does this through a conception of the totality of social relations that is distinct from the historical avant-gardes and therefore not merely a parody of them. But this political project of a globalized postcolonialism that is to replace the project of communism remains currently highly indeterminate, leaving Enwezor's artistic gambits in debt to a future that demands a formidable struggle. If we are to judge Documenta 11 in a way that is less directly indebted to such a future, then it is as a watershed in the development of a postcolonial art practice. It is certainly not unprecedented in conception. The discourses of postcoloniality have been well established over the last twenty-five years. Its novelty is more curatorial and opportunistic. It articulates the unity of the discourses and practices of postcolonialism and avant-gardism on the global stage provided by Documenta.

1 This has been largely due to two factors: the expanding interests in social and institutional histories within art history, and the curatorial boom of the late 1980s and 1990s. New academic programs in curatorial practice also demand historical cases to study. A landmark in exhibition history was the 1988 show at the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin and the accompanying publication, *Stationen Der Moderne: Die Bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen Des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1988), which documented twenty exhibitions held in Germany from 1910–69.

2 For documentation of many of these exhibitions, see Phaidon Editors and Bruce Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1863–1959* (London: Phaidon Press, 2008)

3 See *Salon to Biennial*: 14–15.

4 See Diana Crane, *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World, 1940–1985* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 2–4.

5 Museum construction was especially active in the Unied States, where a study from 1975 determined that 45 percent of American art museums had been created since 1940. See Crane: 5.

6 Sandberg was also an outstanding designer, creating about 250 catalogs and more than 270 posters for the museum. Ad Petersen, *Sandberg, Designer and Director of the Stedelijk* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2004).

7 For a history and discussion of Leering's work at the Van Abbemuseum, see *Museum in Motion?/The Modern Art Museum at Issue (Museum beweging?/ Het museum voor moderne kunst ter diskussie)*, (Eindhoven: Government Printing Office, 1979).

8 For installation photographs of the 1968 Minimalism exhibition, see Cor Blok, "Minimal Art at The Hague," *Art International*, 15 May 1968: 18–24.

9 For an evocative account of this period in the Netherlands, see Bart de Baere and Selma Klein Essink, "'Op Losse Schroeven': An Interview with Wim Beeren," *Kunst & Museumjournaal*, VI: 6, 1995: 41–50.

10 For accounts of Rauschenberg's award, see Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1980), ch. 1; Annie Cohen-Solal, *Leo and his Circle: The Life of Leo Castelli* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010): 286–304; and Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895–1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968): 149–150.

11 *Salon to Biennial*: 12–13.

12 See Walter Grasskamp, "*Degenerate Art* and *Documenta I* – Modernism Ostracised and Disarmed," in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (eds.), *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994): 163–194.

13 Walter Grasskamp, "To Be Continued: Periodic Exhibitions (*documenta*, For Example)," *Tate Papers*, Autumn 2009, *http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/09autumn/grasskamp. shtm* (accessed 13 April 2010).

14 See Vicki Clark, ed., *International Encounters: The Carnegie International and Contemporary Art, 1896–1996* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1996).

15 Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895–1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968): 22. For Alloway's analysis of the obsolescence of the reporting function of recurring exhibitions in a time of increased communication and information, see "Institution: Whitney Annual," *Artforum*, March 1973: 32. The point became current in the mid-to-late 1960s, as with this view on the 1966 Venice Biennale: "The whole artworld has now become so internationalized and self-aware that one knows everything almost before it happens. Artists in 1966 who might have provided surprises [...] have already been seen in London." Alan Bowness, "Reflections on the Biennale 1," *Studio International*, August 1966: 77. Similarly, J. van der Marck on Documenta 5: "We may have arrived at that critical point where media communication has all but preempted the international exhibition's informative function. To retain its rationale and meaning to the art world, the international exhibition will have to rearrange its objectives, making education in depth its principal goal." J. van der Marck, "Venice and Kassel: The Old and the New Politics," *Art in America*, November–December 1972: 132.

16 The increased availability of information and images in the 1960s was taken by some to undermine the notion of the avant-garde. See Harold Rosenberg, "Collective, Ideological, Combative," in Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery, eds., *The Avant-Garde, Art News Annual XXXIV* (New York: Macmillan, 1968): 78, and Lawrence Alloway, "Network: The Art World Described as a System," *Artforum*, September 1972: 31.

17 In 1974 Jean-Christophe Ammann argued that a thematic approach should be employed for the display of museum collections, and not just in special exhibitions. See, "Problems of Presenting Contemporary Art," in *Museum in Motion?*: 168.

18 The practice of bringing artists to create work on site was pioneered by German dealers in the late 1960s, especially Konrad Fischer. See Sophie Richard, *Unconcealed: The International Network of Conceptual Artists1967–77; Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections* (London: Ridinghouse, 2009): 57.

19 On the profession of the independent curator, see Beti Zerovc, "The Role of the Contemporary Art Curator: A Historical and Critical Analysis," *Manifesta Journal*, Spring/Summer 2005, in *MJ – Manifesta Journal: Journal of Contemporary Curatorship*, vol. 2 (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008): 138–153, and Pascal Gielen, "The Biennial: A Post-Institution for Immaterial Labour," in *Open*, no. 16, 2009: 8–17.

20 A similar decision was made at the same time by Wim Beeren, who left the Stedelijk Museum after "Op Losse Schroeven" to curate the important sculpture show Sonsbeek '71. But Beeren, unlike Szeemann, eventually returned to museum work. See Baere and Essink: 45–46.

21 For details of Harald Szeemann's exhibitions, see Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeyer, eds., *Harald Szeemann, with by through because towards despite: Catalogue of all Exhibitions 1957—2005* (Zurich: Edition Voldemeer, and New York: Springer Wien, 2007). On Szeemann also see Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Exhibition Maker* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006), Florence Derieux, ed., *Harald Szeemann: Individual Methodology* (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2007), and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating* (Zurich: JRP/Ringer, 2009): 80–100.

22 For an analysis of contemporary curatorial work structured by the French notion of the cinema *auteur*, see Nathalie Heinrich and Michael Pollak, "From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur: Inventing a Singular Position," in Ressa Greenberg et al., *Thinking About Exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 1996): 231–250.

23 Daniel Buren, "An Exhibition of An Exhibition," *Documenta 5 : Befragung der Realität Bildwelten heute* (Kassel: Documenta GmbH, 1972); see pp. 171–2 herein. For his recent reflections on the situation of artists and curators, and the increasing domination of the former by the later, see Daniel Buren, "Where are the Artists?," in Jens Hoffmann, ed., *The Next Documenta Should be Curated by an Artist* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2004), which includes the text of his original 1972 essay. Available on-line at: *http://www.e-flux.com/projects/next_doc/d_buren.html* (accessed 20 July 2010)

24 Peter Plagens, "557,087," *Artforum*, November 1969: 67; see pp. 122–4 herein.

25 Thomas McEvilley, "Venice the Menace," *Artforum*, October 1993: 104. The show's curator was Christian Leigh, perhaps the most outlandish of the period's independent curators. See Alexi Worth, "The Trouble with Christian," *Artforum*, March 2003: 242–245, 281–282.

26 On this aspect of "Anti-Illusion," see James Monte, "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials," in James Monte and Marcia Tucker, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1969): 5, and the exhibition review by Emily Wasserman, *Artforum*, September 1969: 57.

27 Baere and Essink: 46.

28 Jack Burnham, "Alice's Head: Reflections on Conceptual Art," *Artforum*, February 1970: 37–38.

29 See James Meyer, "The Second Degree, Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art," in Michael Corris, ed., *Conceptual Art: Theory Myth and Practice* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 108–122.

30 For other ways in which the form and content of an exhibition can be related, see *Salon to Biennial*: 18.

31 Interestingly, Szeemann's diary of his assembling "Attitudes" was published in the catalog of "*Op Losse Schoeven*," Wim Beeren's exhibition that took advantage of many U.S. artists' coming to Europe for "Attitudes" to have them make works in Amsterdam. For Szeemann's text, see Christian Rattemeyer, ed., *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and "When Attitudes Become Form' 1969* (London: Afterall Books, 2010): 172–188; see pp. 103–8 herein. The documenting of curatorial process in exhibition catalogs has become more common as curatorial self-consciousness has evolved into a dominant theme in exhibition practice. A particularly striking case is Valerie Smith's catalog for "Sonsbeek 93," with its 300 pages of notes and correspondence documenting the development of her ideas and exchanges with artists, including those who never made it into the exhibition.

32 For an overview of Siegelaub's exhibitionary work, see *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition*, ch. 13, and Alex Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2003).

33 The proper title of The Xerox Book was a list of the artists: *Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner*. The curators for the sections of Siegelaub's magazine exhibition (*Studio International*, July–August 1970) were David Antin, Germano Celant, Michel Claura, Charles Harrison, Lucy Lippard, and Hans Strelow. Highlighting the international character of his audience, Siegelaub published texts in English, French, and German, as he had also done for "July, August, September 1969."

34 For a discussion of publications as spaces of exhibition, see Anne Rorimer, "Siting the Page: Exhibiting Works in Publications—Some Examples of Conceptual Art in the USA," in Michael Newman and Jon Bird, *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999): 11–26.

35 On this and other conceptually based exhibitions, see Bruce Altshuler, "Instructions for a World of Stickiness: The Early Conceptual Work of Yoko Ono," in *YES YOKO ONO*, exh. cat. (New York: Japan Society and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000) . In April 1969 at the Konrad Fischer Gallery, for his first one-person exhibition in Europe, Lawrence Weiner exhibited only cards with statements as to how works could be constructed. (Richards, *Unconcealed*: 91–92.) Essentially, this show transposed to gallery walls the conceptual approach taken by Seth Siegelaub in his catalog exhibitions.

36 The 44-minute "Art by Telephone" recording can be heard at: *http://www.ubu.com/sound/art_by_telephone.html*. (Accessed 10 May 2010.) Van der Marck was inspired by László Moholy-Nagy's 1922 production of a set of enameled paintings by the dictation of directions to a fabricator over the telephone. Another telephone event occurred in May 1968 when, as his contribution to an exhibition at La Tartaruga gallery in Rome, poet Nanni Balestrini called in radical slogans from the streets of Paris that were then written on the gallery walls. Robert Lumley, "Spaces of Arte Povera," in Richard Flood and Frances Morris, eds, *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera 1962–1972* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2001): 56.

37 For one of its many catalogs, see Hans Ulrich Obrist, *do it* (New York: Independent Curators International, 1997). To date, "do it" has been realized in almost 100 sites.

38 On Fischer's role promoting and selling conceptual art to museums, see Richard, *Unconcealed*. The "Prospect" exhibitions were a commercial-institutional-public hybrid, organized by Düsseldorf dealers and the city to compete with the Cologne art fair and combat the rising stature of Cologne as a contemporary art center. "Prospect 68" was held in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf the month before the second Cologne Kunstmarkt, with an international jury of distinguished artworld figures selecting the galleries that chose the artworks to exhibit. (pp. 79–81) Fischer also arranged one-person shows of his artists at the Museum Mönchengladbach (Carl Andre, Hanne Darboven), Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld (Richard Long, Fred Sandback, Sol LeWitt, Jan Dibbetts), and Museum Wuppertal Studio (Blinky Palermo). Georg Jappe, "Interview with Konrad Fischer," *Studio International*, February 1971: 68.

39 For installation photographs of the Fischbach Gallery exhibition, see Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," *Art International*, 20 November 1966: 36, 37, 39.

40 Robert Lumley, "Arte Povera in Turin: The Intriguing Case of the Deposito d'Arte Presente," in Francesco Manacorda and Robert Lumley, eds., *Marcello Levi: Ritratto Di Un Collezionista/ Marcello Levi: Portrait of a Collector* (Turin: hopefulmonster editore, 2005): 89–105.

41 Some artists organized multiple exhibitions, such as those put together by Joseph Kosuth in 1967 in an exhibition space of his own, first called the Lannis Gallery and then the Museum of Normal Art. Here he presented both his own work and that of others in "Non-Anthropomorphic Art by Four Young Artists: Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, Michael Renaldi, Ernest Rossi" (Lannis Gallery, February–May), "Fifteen People Present Their Favorite Book" (Lannis Gallery, May–June), and "Normal Art" (Museum of Normal Art, November). Kosuth revived his curatorial activity later on a grander scale in an exhibition of artworks relating to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The Play of the Unsayable" (*Das Spiel des Unsagbaren*), Vienna Seccession, 1989, and with a show mounted in response to visual arts censorship prompted by the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts controversy, "The Play of the Unmentionable," Brooklyn Museum, September–December 1990.

42 Broodthaers's project culminated in two displays at Documenta 5; one was in the museums-by-artists section of the show that included Claes Oldenburg's "Mouse Museum," which, along with Oldenburg's 1961 "The Store," are examples of artworks in the form of exhibitions. On these museum projects, see Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999). Another artwork-as-exhibition is the December 1967 Galerie J collective exhibition in Paris of B.M.P. T. (Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni). These artists had each developed a signature motif—Buren uniform vertical stripes, Parmentier horizontal ones, Mosset a black circle in the middle of a white canvas, Toroni square brushstrokes at regular intervals—and for this show it was said that each of them had painted the work of another member, the exhibition thus itself being a work about authenticity and artistic identity.

43 On these exhibitionary artworks, see Coosje Van Bruggen, *Claes Oldenburg: Mouse Museum/ Ray Gun Wing* (Otterlo: Kröller-Müller Museum and Cologne: Museum Ludwig, 1979); Ingrid Schaffner, ed., *Douglas Blau* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2009): 14–15 and Roberta Smith, "'Fictions,' Views of the Future and the Past," *New York Times*, 11 December. 1987; and Lisa G. Corrin, *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson* (Baltimore: The Contemporary and New York: New Press, 1994).

44 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002). For a critique, see Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, Fall 2004: 51–79.

45 Among these exhibitions were "No Man's Time" (Centre National d'Art Contemporain—Villa Arson, Nice, 1991), "Backstage" (Kunstverein in Hamburg, 1993), "Lost Paradise" (Kunstraum Wien, Vienna, 1994), "Traffic" (CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 1996), and "Moment Ginza" (Magasin, Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble and Färgfabriken, Center for Contemporary Art & Architecture, Stockholm, 1997). For these exhibitions and others, see Nancy Spector, ed., *theanyspacewhatever* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2008).

46 On Collins & Milazzo, see Dan Cameron, "On Collins & Milazzo," *Artforum*, October 1999; Alison Pearlman, *Unpackaging Art of the 1980s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003): 116–124, and John C. Welchman, *Art after Appropriation: Essays on art in the 1990s* (London: Routledge, 2001): 31–32. For their dense and somewhat eccentric theorizing, see Collins & Milazzo, *Hyperframes: A Post-Appropriation Discourse, Vol. 1* (Paris: Éditions Antoine Candau, 1989).

47 For an overview of contemporary curatorial training programs, see Andrea Bellini, "Curatorial Schools: Between Hope and Illusion," *Flash Art*, October 2006.

48 For a review of the literature on globalization as it pertains to the artworld, see Lara Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, "Cultural Globalization between Myth and Reality: The Case of the Contemporary Visual Arts." *http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04-lang_en/theory_buchholz_en.htm* (accessed 12 August 2010).

49 For Group Material see Julie Ault, ed., *Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material*, London: Four Corners Books, 2010; and Alison Green, "Artist Citizens: Group Material" and Claire Grace, "Counter-Time: Group Material's Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and South America," in *Afterall*, Spring 2011.

50 On the situation in the 1970s, see Elena Kornetchuk, "The Politics of Soviet Art," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, October 1977: 32–37.

51 On the Eastern European situation see Laszlo Beke, "Conceptual Tendencies in Eastern European Art," in Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss, eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (Queens, N.Y.: Queens Museum of Art, 1999): 40–51. Among the actions of the Hungarian authorities were the closure of the "Movement" exhibition in Pecs in 1969 and in 1973 shutting the Balatonboglar Chapel Gallery, an alternative space. For the Leipzig "Autumn Salon," see Lutz Dammbeck, "The First Leipzig Autumn Salon," in Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., *Subversive: Praktiken/Practices* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2010): 526–530. For Herwarth Walden's 1913 "First German Autumn Salon," see *Salon to Biennial*: 139–150.

52 For an account of Latin American conceptualism in its political context, see Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), and Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960–1980," in *Global Conceptualism*: 52–71. On "Tucuman Arde" and the events around "Experiencias '68," see Camnitzer, ch. 7. A fascinating example of avant-garde exhibition practice during Brazil's military dictatorship is the "6th Exhibition of Young Contemporary Art" at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo; artists were chosen and assigned spaces

by lot, and their projects discussed and constructed collectively. On this show, see Cristina Freire's interview with Walter Zanini, "Walter Zanini and the Sixth Jovem Arte Contemporanea Exhibition/ Manifestation," *Manifesta Journal 11: The Canon of Curating*, 2010–11: 53–59. On the boycott of the 1969 São Paulo Biennial, see James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010): 117–124.

53 For an overview of Chinese developments, see Gao Minglu, "Conceptual Art with Anticonceptual Attitude: Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong," in Global Conceptualism: 126–139, and Wu Hung, *Exhibiting Experimental Art in China* (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, 2000): 12–16.

54 The attack was launched by Thomas McEvilley's incendiary review, "Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief: *Primitivism in Twentieth–Century Art* at the Museum of Modern Art," *Artforum*, November 1984: 54–61.

55 On the Havana Biennial, see Rachel Weiss, ed., *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989*. London: Afterall Books, 2011. See also Luis Camnitzer, "The Biennial of Utopias," in Luis Camnitzer (Rachel Weiss, ed.), *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), ch. 25.

56 Hou Hanru, "Towards a New Locality: Biennials and 'Global Art'," in Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic, eds., *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post–Wall Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005): 57–62.

57 Among the important Istanbul Biennials in this regard are the 3rd (1992), "Production of Cultural Difference," curator Vasif Kortun; the 4th (1995), "ORIENT/ATION, The Vision of Art in a Paradoxical World," curator René Block; the 5th (1997), "On Life, Beauty, Translations and Other Differences," curator Rosa Martinez; the 7th (2001), "Egofugal: Fugue from Ego for the Next Emergence," curator Yuko Hasegawa; the 8th (2003), "Poetic Justice," curator Dan Cameron; the 9th (2005), "Istanbul," curator Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun; the 10th (2007), "Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War," curator Hou Hanru; and the 11th (2009), "What Keeps Mankind Alive?," curated by the curatorial collective WHW (What, How & For Whom).

58 The first nine Manifestas were held in Rotterdam (1996), Luxembourg (1998), Ljubljana (2000), Frankfurt (2002), San Sebastian (2004), Nicosia (2006—canceled), Trentino–South Tyrol (2008), Murcia (Spain, 2010) and Genk (Belgium, 2012). On Manifesta and analyses of biennials, see Vanderlinden and Filipovic, eds., *The Manifesta Decade*.

59 There was an attempt by the Johannesburg City Council to close the Second Johannesburg Biennial a month early, but through great effort this was avoided. For a call in 2000 by major art world figures, many from Latin America, for the reinstatement of the Johannesburg Biennial, see: *http://www.mail-archive.com/fluxlist@scribble.com-msg03505.html* (accessed 10 August 2010).

60 *http://www.aaa.org.hk/onlineprojects/bitri/en/didyouknow.aspx* (Accessed 12 August 2010)

61 The exhibitions were "Alternating Currents," curators Okwui Enwezor and Octavio Zaya; "Important and Exportant," curator Gerardo Mosquera; "Transversions," curator Yu Yeon Kim; "Hong Kong, etc.," curator Hou Hanru. And two shows held not in Johannesburg but in Cape Town: "Graft," curator Colin Richards; and "Life's Little Necessities," curator Kellie Jones.

62 Jonathan Napack, "Report from Gwangju: Alternative Visions," *Art in America*, November 2002: 95–99.

63 In 2001, Hou Hanru suggested that "(p)erhaps the most important element in any successful exhibition is its orientation to a certain time and place, its cultural backdrop, its significance within its locale." Ou Ning, "Talk Goes on: Interview with Hou Hanru," first published in *Art Union*, 2001, reprinted in Hou Hanru, *On The Mid–Ground: Selected Texts by Hou Hanru*, (Timezone 8, 2002). On the local and the global, see Hou Hanru, "Towards a New Locality: Biennials and 'Global Art'," in Vanderlinden and Filipovic, eds., *The Manifesta Decade*: 57–62.

64 Among other curators especially active in organizing biennials were Harald Szeemann, Fumio Nanjo, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Rosa Martinez, and Dan Cameron. For the many demands on those curating major exhibitions during this period, see Michael Brenson, "The Curator's Moment," *Art Journal*, Winter 1998: 16–27.

65 On Bonami's curatorial strategy, see Steven Henry Madoff, "One for All," *Artforum*, May 2003: 71–73, and Scott Rothkopf, "In the Bag," *Artforum*, September 2003: 175–177, 240.

66 Another important example is the Raqs Media Collective based in New Delhi, India. On the general phenomenon, see *Manifesta Journal*, Summer, 2010.

67 David Levi Strauss, "The Bias of the World: Curating after Szeemann and Hopps," in Steven Rand and Heather Kouris, eds., *Cautionary Tales: Critical Curating* (New York: Apex Art, 2007): 23.

68 Chin-Tao Wu, "Biennials Without Borders?," *Tate Papers*, Autumn 2009: http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/09autumn/chin.shtm (accessed 13 April 2010).

69 Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube," in B. Vanderlinden and E. Filipovic, eds., *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post–Wall Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005): 63–84. *Peter Schjeldahl, "Festivalism: Oceans of Fun at the Venice Biennale," The New Yorker*, 5 July 1999): 85–86.

70 Okwui Enwezor, "Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form," *MJ–Manifesta Journal* 2, Winter 2003–Spring 2004: 6–31. Carlos Basualdo, "The Unstable Institution," in Paula Marincola, ed., *What Makes a Great Exhibition?* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, 2006): 52–61.

71 Bruce Ferguson and Milena Hoegsberg, "Talking and Thinking about Biennials: The Potential of Discursivity," in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebo, eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz, 2010): 360–375.

72 The topics were Platform 1: Democracy Unrealized; Platform 2: Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice & the Processes of Truth & Reconciliation; Platform 3: *Créolité* & Creolization (an exploration of global cultural miscegenation) and Platform 4: Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos. Documentation of these platforms was published in separate volumes.

73 On "New Institutionalism" see Claire Doherty, "The institution is dead! Long live the institution! Contemporary Art and New Institutionalism," *Engage*, September 2004, Alex Farquharson, "Bureaux de Change," *Frieze*, September 2006, and Maria Lind and Alex Farquharson, "Integrative Institutionalism: A Reconstruction," in T. Hansen and T. Iverson, eds., *The New Administration of Aesthetics* (Torpedo Press, 2007). Such institutions were, as Charles Esche put it in describing Rooseum, a "mix of community centre, club, academy and showroom." Charles Esche, "What's the Point of Art Centres Anyway? Possibility, Art and Democratic Deviance" (2004), *http://republicart.net/disc/institution/esche01_en.htm* (acc. 21 August 2011).

74 For the Munich Kunstverein's program during the years that it was directed by Maria Lind, see Maria Lind et al, eds, *Gesammelte Drucksachen/ Collected Newsletters, Spring 02–Fall 04* (Munich and Frankfurt am Main: Kunstverein München and Revolver, 2004). Ironically, the progressive Münich Kunstverein occupies the same galleries as did the Nazi's 1937 "Degenerate Art" exhibition.

75 *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now, exhibition catalog*, (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008); Claire Bishop, ed., *Participation* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012).

76 The participatory tradition has moved from such works of the late 1960s/early 1970s through projects associated with relational aesthetics to larger exhibitionary productions, as with the 2012 Busan Biennale, in which artistic director Roger Buergel has the works generated by "councils" of ten to fifteen local citizens working together with invited artists. Busan Biennale Organizing Committee, "Busan Biennale," 15 July 2011, *http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/9867* (accessed 20 July 2011).

77 Huyghe's remark is cited by Hans Ulrich Obrist in Spector, ed., *theanyspacewhatever*: 150. Other artists closely associated with relational aesthetics are Rirkrit Tiravanija, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Philippe Parreno, Carsten Holler and Liam Gillick.

78 One might look at this development as a continuation of the march of self-reflection in modern art, beginning with Clement Greenberg's identification of modernism as the investigation of the nature of the medium through that medium, through the conceptualist focus on the conceptual nature of the work of art and institutional critique's interrogation of the artworld system, to exhibitions whose subject matter is the nature of the exhibition system.

79 For the Bergen Biennial Conference, see: *http://www.bbc2009.no/* (accessed 23 August 2011).

80 Maurizio Cattelan, *6th Caribbean Biennial—A Project by Maurizio Cattelan* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2001).

81 Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating and the Educational Turn* (Amsterdam and London: de Appel and Open Editions, 2010).

82 For the curatorial program and planning of Manifesta 6, see *Notes for an Art School* (Manifesta 6 School Books). An archive of events at Unitednationsplaza and Night School can be found at: *http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/* (accessed 4 September 2011).

83 For a discussion of ways in which exhibitions can be marked as significant to various histories, see Bruce Altshuler, "A Canon of Exhibitions," *Manifesta Journal 11 (The Canon of Curating)*, 2010–11: 3–12.

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INDEX

Page numbers in italics refer to illustrations.

"0–10: The Last Futurist Exhibition of Pictures" (Petrograd, 1915) 11
"557,087" (Seattle Art Museum Pavilion, 1969) 15, 113–26, *116–21*
"955,000" (Vancouver 1969) 16, 115
"2,972,453" (Buenos Aires, 1970) 16, 115

Abish, Cecile, 176
Acconci, Vito, *116*, 117, 137, *137*, 156
Adams, Alice, 176
Adamson, Steven, 258, *259*, *264*
Agam, Yaacov 105
Agentur für Geistige Gastarbeit (Agency for Spiritual Guest Work) 14
Ahearn, John 191, 199; *Man in Red*, 196, *197*; "Times Square Show", billboard 194, *194*; "Times Square Show", poster 192, *193*
"Air Art" (1968–9) 17
Akpan, Jack *288*
Alexander, Peter 109
Alloway, Lawrence 175–6
Al-Oatab, Khalifa 254
Alÿs, Francis 371
Amaral, Tarsila do 368, 372
Ammann, Jean-Christophe 16, 111–12, 159, *160*, 172, 175, 176
Amsterdam Theater, New York 196
Andrade, Oswald de 359, 368, 369, 370
Andre, Carl 12, 55, *58*, 59, 61, 65, 66, 105, 108, 109, 115, 122, 124, 156, *160*
"A New Spirit in Painting" (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1981) 18, 203–14, *206–10*
Annesley, David, *Swing Low*, 56, *56*
Anselmo, Giovanni 77, 79, 80, 102, *103*, *288*
"Anti-Illusion: Procedures–Materials" (New York, 1969) 119
Antoni, Janine, *Chocolate Gnaw 316*, 325
Antonioni, Michelangelo 48
Applebroog, Ida, *Marginalia* series *317*, 325
Appollonio, Umbro 13
Araeen, Rasheed 295, 295–6
Arahmaniani 353
Araki, Nobuyoshi 371
Arakawa, Shusaku 106
Arefine, Tony 257
Argan, Giulio Carlo 368
Armajani, Siah, *North Dakota Project* 132, *133*; *Number Between 0 and* 1 132, *133*
Armaly, Fareed, *From-To 381*
Arman 51, 52; *Accumulation of Sabres* 44, *45*
The Armory Show (New York, 1913) 11
Arnatt, Keith 123
"Art by Telephone" (Chicago, 1969) 16
"Art of Assemblage" (New York, 1961) 41
Arte Povera 12
"Arte Povera + Azioni Povere" (Amalfi, 1968) 16, 17, 67–80, *70–6*, 101, 105, 145
Artschwager, Richard 55, 97, 108, 123, 125, 126, 145, 153, 156; *blps* 98, *99*, *100*, *120*; *Formica Table with Pink Tablecloth 59*
ARTSLUT, *Baggage* (with Christine Hill) 334, *335*
Art Workers Coalition 129, 141
Ashbery, John 48–9, 51
Asher, Michael *363*, 371
Ashton, Dore 92, 252–3
"Attitudes" (Kunsthalle, Bern, 1969) 13–14, 95–112, *98–104*, 145
Auerbach, Frank 213, 214
Avalanche 16
Aycock, Alice 176

"Bachelor Machines" (Bern, 1975) 14
Bacon, Francis 211, 214, 359, 371
Baj, Enrico 40, 44, 52; *Style Furniture* 44, *45*
Bakker, Douwe Jan 146, 156
Baldessari, John 123, 126, *130*
Balka, Miroslaw 370, 371
Balthus *210*, 211, 213
Barney, Matthew 329, 340
Barr, Alfred, Jr. 14, 176
Barrio, Artur *130*, 364, *364*
Barry, Robert 83, *84*, *86*, 89, 90, 93, 107, 115, 122, 125
Barthelme, Rick *116*, 117, 126
Baruchello, Gianfranco 40
Baselitz, Georg *18*, *206*, *207*, 212; *Eagle 209*; *Male Figure with Wings 209*
Basualdo, Carlos *376*, 378, 388
Bataille, Georges 338, 378
Battcock, Gregory 92–3, 140–1
Bauer, Ute Meta *376*
Baxter, Iain 122, 123, 129
Béar, Liza 16
Beaucamp, Eduard 174
Bechtle, Robert *165*
Bédia, José *290*, 291
Beecroft, Vanessa *334*, 342
Beeren, Wim 12, 14, 16, 97, 145, *152*, 153–4, 155
Bell, Larry *60*
Bellamy, Dick 106
Berkeley, Edmund C. 125
Bernabe, Jean 385
Beuys, Joseph 12, 14, 97, *101*, 106, 108, 112, 145, 156, 159, *168*, 201, 205, 309; *Fat Corner 101*; "Office for Direct Democracy" 22
Bhabha, Homi 322
Bhimji, Zarina 388
Biddle, Flora miller 324
Bill, Max 63
Bladen, Ronald 61, 66, 145, 153, 155; *Three Elements 58*, *59*; *The Wedge 147*
Blake, Peter 51
Blau, Douglas, "Fictions" (1987) 17
Blaue Reiter, "First Exhibition of the Editors of the Blaue Reiter" (Munich, 1911) 11
Blistène, Bernard 217
Blotkamp, Carel 155–6
Bochner, Mel 65–6, 126; *Measurement Series: By Formula (Circle) 134*, *135*; *Territorial Reserve #4*, catalog card *116*, 117; "Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art" *11*, 15
Bock, John, *Gribbohm II b*, *377*
Bode, Arnold 12, 159, *160*, 172, 176
Boetti, Alighiero 77, 78, 79, 80; *Me Sunbathing in Turin 19 January 1969 101*; *Shaman Showman 73*
Boezem, Marinus 105, 106, 156
Bollinger, Bill 106, 107, 115, *116*, 117, 125; *Pipe Pieces 100*
Boltanski, Christian 239, 310; *Inventory of Objects Belonging to a Young Woman of Charleston 306*; *Shadows 301*
Bonami, Francesco 21, 25
Bond, Henry 257, 342; *Workstation 334*
Bordachev, Sergei *182*
Borland, Christine 22
Bosman, Richard, *Three Blind Mice 198*
Bouabré, Frédéroc Bruly, *Alphabet Bété 383*
Bourdon, David 11
Bourriaud, Nicholas 17, 22, 329, 338–9, 340, 341, 342
Bowness, Alan 211
Boza Sánchez, Juan *249*
Bracy, Christian 253
Braun, Karlheinz 172
Bregger, Stig 132, *133*
Brenson, Michael 308–9
Brinch, Jes 341; *Alternative Society* (with Henrik Plenge Jakobsen) *332*, 333
Brock, Bazon 14, 159, 168, 172
Broodthaers, Marcel, *Musée d'art moderne, department des aigles (Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles) 14*, 17, 162, 163
Brown, Gavin 24
Brown, Stanley 156
Bruggen, Coosje van, *From the Entropic Library* (with Claes Oldenburg) 286, *287*
Buchloh, Benjamin H.D. 293–4
"Bulldozer Exhibition" (Moscow, 1974) 18–19, 177–88, *180–4*
Bulloch, Angela 258, *259*, *261*, *263*, 265
Burden, Chris, *Three Ghost Ships 306*, 310
Bure, Gilles de 340–1
Buren, Daniel 15, *104*, 105, 125, 145, *152*, 156, 159, 173–4, 220, 231, 238
Bürger, Pierre 389
Burgy, Donald 126
Burkhard, Balthasar 98, *98*
Burnham, Jack 123
Buthe, Michael 239
Butler, Eugenia 109
Butler, Judith 322
Byars, James Lee *134*, *166*

Cabrita Reis, Pedro 371
Cage, John 37, 122, 123, 139
Cai Guo-Qiang *350*
Cain, Peter, *EP 110 320*, 321; *Pathfinder 320*, 321
Calder, John 63
Callard, Andrea, *Ailanthus Leaves* 196, *197*
Calzolari, Pier Paolo 79, 109
Cameron, Dan 326
Camnitzer, Luis 23, 253–4
Camoni, Riccardo 78
Cao Biao 280
Cardena, Ernesto *250*
Cardiff, Janet 371
Caribbean Biennial 23, 329
Carlson, Cynthia 176
Carnegie International (Pittsburgh) 12–13
Caro, Anthony 55; *Titan 56*
Castelli, Leo 12, 17, 83, 106, 107, 108, 176
Castle, Frederick 123
Castro, Fidel 243, 252
Castro, Humberto, *The Fall of Icarus 247*
Cattelan, Maurizio 23, *336*, 337, 342; *La Dolce Utopia* (with Philippe Parenno) 330, *331*, *332*
Celant, Germano 16, 69, 71, *73*, 77, 79
"Chambres d'Amis" (Ghent, 1986) 229–40, *232–6*
Chamoiseau, Patrick 385
Chang, Yung Ho 354, 356; *Asia Town 349*, *350*
Chaput, Thierry 217, 226
Charlier, Jacques 239
Charlton, Alan 213
Cheang, Shu Lea, *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire 320*, 321, 325
Chen Shao Xiong 353
Chen Wenji 276, *276*
Chi Ti-Nan 353
Chicago, Judy 55, 56, *57*; see also Gerowitz, Judy
"China–Avant-Garde" (National Museum, Beijing, 1989) 19, 267–82, *270–7*
China National Fine Arts Association 278
Chouay, Françoise 49
Christanto, Dadang *366*, 367
Christian, David Abraham *168*
Christo 12, 52, 111, 156; *Package 44*
Cinto, Sandra 370, 371
"Cities on the Move" (Vienna, 1998) 343–56, *345–51*
Cladders, Johannes 106
Clark, Lygia 371
Clay, Jean 105
Cleaver, Kathleen 129
Close, Chuck, *John 164*, 165
COBRA (Amsterdam, 1949) 12, 38
Cohen, Elaine Lustig *56*
Colab (Collaborative Projects, Inc.) 21, 192
Coleman, James 309, 310
Collins, Tricia 17–18
Collishaw, Mat 257, *259*, *262*, 264; *Bullet Hole 258*
Colnaghi, Carlo *76*, 77
Confiant, Raphael 385
Cooke, Lynne 309–10
Cooper, Ron 109
Cork, Richard 212
Cornelis, Jef *152*, 231
Cortez, Diego 191
Costi, Rochelle *364*, 370
Cotton, Paul 108, *166*
Cournot, Michel 227–8
Craddock, Sacha 265
Cragg, Tony 266
Craig-Martin, Michael 213, 257
"Cubism and Abstract Art" (New York, 1936) 14
Cutforth, Roger 132, *133*

Dak'Art, Dakar, Senegal 20
Dal Lago, Francesca 355–6
Damisch, Hubert 339
Darboven, Hanne 122, 156, *170*
d'Armagnac, Ben 146, 156
Davenport, Ian *262*, *263*, 265, 266

David, Catherine 22, 23
David, Catherine 375, 387, 388
De Andrea, John, *Arden Anderson and Nora Murphy 165*
De Bono, Edward 112
Deacon, Destiny 388
"The Decade Show" (New York, 1990) 18
Deitch, Jeffrey 200
Dekkers, Ger 146, 153, 156
De Maria, Walter 60, 60, 132, *133; Art by Telephone 100*
Denes, Agnes 176
Denis, Dominic 257, 264
Derrida, Jacques 220
Develing, Enno 12
Dias, Antonio 253
Dibbets, Jan 69, 78, 79, 79–80, 97, 105, 106, 153, 156; *A White Line of Wooden Poles 75*
Dickson, Jane 191, *194*
Didi 292, *292*
Dine, Jim 29, 37, 41, 42, *43*, 50, 51, 52; *Five Feet of Colorful Tools 44; Lawnmower* 44, *45*
"Documenta 5" (Kassel, 1972) 12–13, *14*, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 157–76, *160–71*, 269
"Documenta X" (Kassel, 1997) 22, 23, 375, 387
"Documenta 11" (Kassel, 2002) 373–89, *376–84*
Dohrn, Bernardine 129
Dominici, Gino *17*
Dono, Heri, *Inner City 347*, 348, 349
Dorner, Alexander 345
Dragset, Ingmar, *Spelling Utopia* (with Michael Elmgreen) *25*
Duchamp, Marcel 48, 49, 50, 51, 105, 126, 129, 139, 163, 338, 339
Duncan, Don 124
Duparc, Christiane 105
Durand, Gilbert 338
Dwan, Virginia 176
"Dylaby" (Amsterdam, 1962) 12, 27–38, *30–35*

"Earth Art" (Cornell University, 1969) 83
Eckhout, Albert 372
Eliasson, Olafur *367*, 370, 371
Elk, Ger van 69, *74*, *76*, 78, 79–80, 98, *99*, 105, 106, 153, 156
Elliot, David 372
Elmgreen, Michael, *Spelling Utopia* (with Ingmar Dragset) *25*
Elskaya, Nadezhda *184*, 186, 188
Elso Padilla, Juan Francisco 248, *248*
Engels, Pieter 156
Enwezor, Okwui 21, 22, 375, *376*, 385–7, 387–8
Ericson, Kate, *Camouflaged History* (with Mel Ziegler) *301*, 310
Esche, Charles 21, 22
Eventstructure Research Group *152*
"Evoking History" (Charleston, 2002) 23
"Experiencias '68" (Buenos Aires, 1968) 19
Eykelboom, Hans 156

Fabro, Luciano 77, 79, 239, 240; *C'est la Vie (That's Life) 233; Half Mirror Half Transparent 70*, 71
Fahlstrom, Oyvind 51
Fairhurst, Angus *263*, 264
Fan Wei Min 280
Fashion Moda 191, 199
Ferrara, Valeria *76*
Ferrer, Rafael 108, 123; *Ice Piece 137*
Finlay, Ian Hamilton 309
"First Exhibition of the Editors of the Blaue Reiter" (Munich, 1911) 11
Fischer, Konrad 14, 16, 172, 176
Fisher, Urs 24
Fitzgibbon, Colen 199; *Gun Dollar Plate* (with Robin Winter) *198*
Flanagan, Barry *118*, 119; *Two Space Rope Sculpture 101*
Flavin, Dan 55, 61, 65, 66, 105, 153
Fleck, Robert 354
Fleury, Sylvia *366*, 367
Fluxus 167, 200
Fogle, Douglas 354–5
Fontana, Lucio 12
Forakis, Peter, *JFK* 56, *57*
"Forms of Color" (Amsterdam, 1966) 12
Fortes, Márcia 370–1
Frank, Peter 93–4
Frazier, Paul, *Pink Split 59*
Freedman, Carl 257, 341–2
Freeman, Asher *363*
"Freeze" (PLA Building, London, 1988) 255–62, *258–63*
Freud, Lucian 214
Friedrich, Heiner 176
Fry, Edward F. 107
Fuchs, Rudi 16, 239–40
Futurist exhibition (1915) 11

Gaba, Meshac, Museum of Contemporary African Art Library *382*
Gabo, Naum 63
Gallaccio, Anya *263*, 265
Ganes, Bobby 199
Gao Brothers 281; *Midnight Mass 276*
Gao Minglu 269, 270, *273*, 278–9, 279
Garciandia, Flavio 253; *The Marco Polo Syndrome 246*
Gaudí, Antonio 48
Gaudibert, Pierre 105, 109
Geldzahler, Henry 41
General Idea 371
Geng Jianyi, *Second State 273*
Genillard, Laure 266
Genzken, Isa, *New Buildings for Berlin 384*
Gerber, Ann 124
Géricault, Théodore 369, 372
Gerowitz, Judy (Judy Chicago) 55; *Rainbow Picket* 56, *57*
Geys, Jef 231; *Egalité, Fraternité, Liberté 236*
Ghez, Susanne *376*
Giacometti, Alberto 41, 44, *45*, 359
Gibson, John 108
Gilardi, Piero 69, 77–8, 80, 97, 106, 109
Gilbert and George *131*, 159, 172
Gill, Simryn 355
Gillick, Liam 262, *332*, *333*, 341, 342
Giorno, John 129; *Dial-A-Poem 131, 134; Giorno Poetry Systems 134*
Giri, G.Y. 252
Glazer, Alexander 179, 188
Glen, Miles 263, *263*
Gober, Robert, *Newspaper 321*, 322
Goings, Ralph *165*
Golden, Thelma 322–3, 324, 325, 326
Goldin, Nan *317*, 325
Goldstein, Richard 199–200
Golub, Leon 388
Gombrich, Ernst 123
Gonzalez-Foerster, Dominique *333*, 340, 341; *Séances biographiques 332*, 334, *335*
Goode, Joe 109
Goodman, Sam 51
Gordon, Bob 108
Gordon, Douglas 342, 353
Gormley, Anthony 307, 308, 309, 310
Gorski, Daniel, *Fourth Down 60*
Gottlieb, Adolph 41, 214
Gowing, Lawrence 211
Goya, Francisco 369, 371
Graham, Dan 83, 126, 231, 238; *Children's Pavilion 235*
Graubner, Gotthard 213
Green, Julien 156
Green, Renée, *Import-Export Funk Office 316; Standardised Octagonal Units for Imagined and Existing Systems 377*
Greer, Manny 83
Gregor, Ulrich 172
Gris, Jean 48
Gross, Mimi 199, 201
Grosvenor, Robert 55, 61, 66, 155; *Transoxiana 59*
Grotowski, Jerzy 69
Group Frontera *134*
Group Material 18, *20*, 21
Grupo Puré *247*
Gu Dexin *274*
Guerilla Art Action Group 140–1
Guerilla Girls 313, 326
Guston, Philip 41, 211, 214
Gutai Artists Association 11
Gu Xiong 274, *274*
Gwangju Biennial 20–21, 24

Haacke, Hans 107, 123, 129, *138*, 141, *160*
Haaning, Jens 340; *Flag Production 336*, 337
Haftmann, Werner 176
Hamilton, Ann 304, *305*, 307, 308–9, 310
Hammons, David 299, 302, *302*, 308, 310
Hanhardt, John G. 324, 325
Hanru, Hou 21, 345, 346, 352–4, 355
Hanson, Duane *165*
"Happening & Fluxus" (Cologne, 1970) 14
Harrison, Charles 97
Hart Davalos, Armando 252
Hatoum, Mona, *Homebound 379*
Haus-Rucker-Co *166*
Havana Biennial (1986) 19–20, 241–54, *244–50*
Have, Piet van der *30*
Haworth, Jann *13*
Heartney, Eleanor 294–5
Heizer, Michael 97, 110, 112, 122, 124, 153
Helion, Jean *210*, 211
Hempel, Lothar *332*, *333*, 341, 342
Herkenhoff, Paulo 359, 368–9, 369–70, 371, 372
Hermes, Sigurd *160*
Hess, Thomas B. 50–51
Hesse, Eva 106, 107, 122, 123, 126, 369; *Accretion 118*, 119; *Augment 100; Sans III 100*
Hickey, Dave 338
Hightower, John 129, 138, 140
Hill, Christine, *Baggage* (with ARTSLUT) 334, *335*
Hill, Gary 325
Hirakawa, Noritoshi *337*, 342
Hirschhorn, Thomas 375; *Bataille-Monument 378*
Hirst, Damien 257, 258, *259*, *262*, *263*, 264, 265, 266, 372
Ho, Oscar 354
Hoberman, J. 192, 202
Hockney, David 210, 213
Hödicke, K.H., *Dapple Greys 209; Deckchair 209*
Hoet, Jan 21, 231, 236, 237–8, 239, 240, 388
Hoffman, Jens 23
Höller, Carsten 330, *331*, 340
Holliday, George 324, 325
Holz, Hans Heinz *160*
Holzer, Jenny 338; *The Living Series 198*
Houshiary, Shirazeh, *The Pole of the Sphere 291*
Huang Yong Ping 282, *290*, 291, 356; *Turtle Town 350*
Huebler, Douglas 62, 83, *84*, 90–1, 92, 93, 107, 122, 123, 124, 156; *Duration Piece No.6 89; Haverhill-Windham-New York Marker Piece 87, 89*
Hulten, Pontus 16, 29, 217
Hume, Gary 258, *259*, *263*, 264, 266
Huot, Robert 125
Husserl, Edmund 238
Huyghe, Pierre 22, *336*, 337, 340
Hwa, Choi Jeong *362*, *363*, *366*, 367

Icaro, Paolo 80
Iden, Peter 172
Impressionist exhibiton (1874) 11
Independent Group (London) 11
Indiana, Robert 12
"Information" (MoMA, New York, 1970) 127–42, *130–8*
"International Survey of Painting and Sculpture" (MoMA, New York, 1984) 205
Irwin, Robert 109
Isaac, Henry 244
Israel, Nico 371
Istanbul Biennial 20, 21
Ivekovic, Sandja 388

Jaar, Alfredo 253
Jackson, Larry *302*
Jacob, Mary Jane 299, 307–8, 310; "Culture in Action" (Chicago, 1993) 21; "Evoking History: Memory of Water and Memory of Land" (Charleston, 2002) *23*; "Places with a Past" (Charleston, 1991) 21
Jacquet, Alain 102, *103*, 106, 109
Jakobsen, Henrik Plenge, *Alternative Society* (with Jes Brinch) *332*, *333*, 341
Jambruk, Nera 286, *287*
James, Laurace 176
James, Philip 211
Jancks, Charles 326
Janis, Sydney 41, 48, 51, 52
Jannou, Dakis 24
"January 5–31, 1969" ["The January Show"] (New York, 1969) 81–94, *84–9*
Jappe, George 172
Jeffrey, Ian 257, 264–5
Jenney, Neil 107, 112
Jewish Museum, New York 12

Joachimides, Christos 18, 205, 211–12, 213, 214
Joe, Paa 286, *287*
Johannesburg Biennial 20–21
Johns, Jasper 12, 50
Jones, Lisa 323
Jorn, Asger 36
Jost, Hanspeter *104*
Jubelin, Narelle 310
Judd, Donald 55, *59*, 61, 62, 64–5, 65, 66, 145, *160*

Kabakov, Ilya 179
Kahane, Lisa 194
Kaiden, Nina 105, 106, 108
Kaltenbach, Stephen 107, 122
Kaprow, Akkan 41, 106
Katase, Kazuo 239
Kawara, On 122, 126, 156
Keenan, Claudia 308
Kelley, Mike 338; "The Uncanny" (1993, 2004, 2010) 24
Kelly, Ellsworth 55
Kender, Janos 17
Kentridge, William 371
Kienholz, Edward 108, *118*, 119, 126; *After the Ball is Over #1 118*, 119; *The Black Chair 118*, 119; *Five Car Stud 164*, 165; *The World 118*, 119
Kim Soo-Ja *367*
Kim, Byron, *Belly Paintings 317*
Kimmelman, Michael 325
"Kineticism: Systems Sculpture in Environmental Situation" (Mexico City, 1968) 17
King, Phillip, *Thorough 60*, 61
Kingelez, Bodys Isek 291; *Kimbembele Ihungo (Kimbeville) 384*
Kinmont, Bob 126
Kirkeby, Per *208*, 209, 214, 286, *287*
Kitaj, R.B. *208*, 209, 213, 214
Klein, Yves 44, *45*, 52, 108, 139; sponge sculptures 46, *47*
Klimt, Gustav 51, 345; *Beethoven frieze 351*
Kluge, Alexander 172
Knoebel, Wolf 156
Koetsier, Hans 146, 156
Kogler, Peter *23*
Kohlhofer, Christof, *Billion Dollar Bill 198*
Komar, Vitaly 179, *180*, *183*, 188
"Kompas" (Eindhoven, 1967 and 1969) 12
König, Kasper 21, 231
Konrad, Aglaia 51, *351*
Koolhaas, Rem 345, 352, 354, 356
Kooning, Willem de 41, 51, *207*, 211, 213
Koons, Jeff 24, 338
Kortu, Vasif 21
Kosuth, Joseph 83, *84*, 90–2, 93–4, 107, 122, 124, 125, 231, *232*, 238, 239; *1. Existence (Art as Idea as Idea) 89; One of Three Chairs 132*, 133; *VI Time (Art as Idea as Idea) 86, 89*
Kounellis, Jannis *208*, 209, 213, 238, 240
Kouwenaar, Gerrit 37
Kozaric, Ivan 379, *379*
Kramer, Hilton 55, 63, 64, 65, 141–2
Kudo, Tetsumi 338
Kuehn, Gary 108
Kwei, Kane 285, 286, *287*

Laing, Gerald *13*
Laing, R.D. 124
Lam, Wifredo 243, 244, 252
Lambert, Yvon 102
Land, Peter *334*
Landy, Michael 258, *259*, *260*, 265, 266
Lane, Abigail 264; Essentials *261*
Langa, Moshekwa 371
Latour, Bruno 220
Lauder, Leonard A. 324
Lavier, Bertrand *234*, 239
Le Va, Barry 15, *160*, *170*
Lee, David 107
Leering Jean 12, 106
Leffingwell, Edward 371–2
Lenares family 285
Lenares, Felipe *292*
Leonilson 371
"Les Immatériaux" (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1985) 215–28, *218–24*
Levin, Kim 194, 200–1
Levine, Les 141
Levine, Sherrie 371
Lévi-Strauss, Claude 112, 139, 142
Lewis, Joe 199
LeWitt, Sol 12, 55, *60*, 65, 66, 108, *116*, 117, 156, 160, *160*, 238, 239, 295; *Modular Piece 148*, 149
Liang Juhui 353
Licht, Jennifer 140
Lichtenstein, Roy 41, 51, 52, 106; *Blam* 44, *45*; *Washington 44*; *Refrigerator 44*
Liew Kung Yu, *Pasti Boleh–Sure Can One 348*, 349
"Light–Space–Motion" (Minneapolis, 1967–8) 17
Ligon, Glenn, *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book 318*
Lima, Laura *363*
Lin Yilin 353
Lind, Maria 22
Linker, Kate 228
Linville, Kasha 155
Lippard, Lucy 15, 16, 17, 55, 115, 122–4, 124, 126, 159, 202; *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* 115
Li Shan 269
Lista, Pietro *74*, 78
Liu Yan *276*
Li Weimin 281
Li Xianting 280–1
Llanes Godoy, Llilian 243
Long, Richard 69, *74*, 78, 79–80, 105, 122, 146, 153, 156, *170*, 285, *287*, 295; *Red Earth Circle 286*
Louw, Roelof 123
Lovink, Geert 353
Lowry, Bates 108
Lo Zoo 69, *74*
Lucas, Sarah 257, 258, *259*, *260*, *263*, 265
Lucassan, Reinier 105
Ludwig, Peter 172
Lum, Ken, *Mirror Maze with 12 Signs of Depression 377*
Luo Brothers 371
Lüpertz, Markus *208*, 209
Lupu, François 293
Lurie, Boris 51
Lyotard, Jean-François 217, 225, 226, 228, 368, 371

Maciunas, George 200
"Magiciens de la Terre" (Centre George Pompidou & Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, 1989) 19, 283–96, 286–92, 326, 389; *Album et inventaire 218*, *219*
Magor, Liz 307, 308; *Hallowed Ground 304*
Maharaj, Sarat *376*
Mahdaoui, Nja 252
Maheu, Jean 226
Mahlangu, Esther 285, *286*
Manetas, Miltos *336*, 337, 342
Manifesta 6 23
Manniko, Esko 371
Mapplethorpe, Robert *318*
Marck, Jan van den 16, 109
Marcuse, Herbert 122, 139, 142
Marden, Brice 213
Marisol 51
Marotta, Gino 69, *76*, 78, 79
Martelli, Plinio 77
Marti, José 248, 252
Martin, Henry 69, *76*, 79, 80
Martin, Jean-Hubert 19, 231, 285, 286, 293, 293–4, 296, 372
Martin, Stewart 389
Martinez, Daniel J. 313, 323, 324, 325; *Museum Tags: Second Movement (Overture) or Overture con Clque–Overture with Hired Audience Members 314*
Martinon, Jean-Paul 388–9
Martorelli, Antonio 252
Marx, Karl 339
Masharawi, Rashid *381*
Mason, James Bond 108
Masterkova, Lydia *182*, 186
Matarazzo, Ciccillo 12, 359, 361
Matsuzawa, Yutaka 156
Matta-Clark, Gordon 338
Mayer, Aline *198*, 199
McCracken, John 62
McEvilly, Thomas 15, 296, 326
Maciunas, George 200
McLean, Bruce *116*, 117, 123, 126, 213
McLuhan, Marshall 129, 139
McShine, Kynaston 54, 55, *58*, 59, 61–2, 63, 129, 139–42
Meana, Carlo Ripa di 19
Meireles, Cildo *364*, *365*, 371
Melamid, Alexander 179, *183*, 188
Melchert, Jim 108
Mellado, Justo Pastor 369
Mendes da Rocha, Paulo 370
Mendive, Manuel 252; *Life 249*
Menna, Filiberto *73*
Menotti, Gian Carlo 299, 308
Mercer, Kobena 387–8
Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil 20, 23–4
Meredith-Vula, Lala *260*, 265
Merz, Mario 77, 79, 80, 109, 156, 170, 171, *208*, 209, *235*, 238, 239, 240, 286, *287*; *Acqua scivolo (Igloo di vetro)* 102, *103*; *Appoggiati 101*; *Hamper 71*; *Sit-in 70*, *71*, *101*
Mesquita, Ivo 369
Milazzo, Andrew 17–18
Milhazes, Beatriz 371
Miller, Brenda 176
Miller, Scott, *Sky Falls 198*
"Mining the Museum" (Baltimore, 1992–3) *20*
Miss, Mary 176
Mock, Richard, *Hoof-Headed Portrait 198*
Molacek, Rudi 356
Montaigne, Michel de 368
Monte, James 15
Montgomery, Candace Hill, *Idi Amin Plate 198*
Moore, Jack 156
Morgan, Stuart 213–14
Morgenthaler, Nick 109
Morley, Malcolm, *The Lone Ranger Lost in the Jungle of Erotic Desires 210*; *Parrots 206*, *210*
Morris, Robert 12, 17, 55, 59, 59, 61, 64–5, 65, 66, 83, 97, 107, 117, 122, 123, 125, 145, 146, *152*, 156, 159, *160*, 175; *Felt Piece No. 4 101*; *Observatory 150*, 151; *Shotgun Piece, 116*, 117, *121*
Moscow, "Bulldozer Exhibition" see "Bulldozer Exhibition"
Mosquera Gerardo 243
Muller, Gregoire 105, 109, 151
Muniz, Vik 370
Muñoz, Juan 238, *286*; *Three Columns and a Dwarf 291*
Myers, Forrest (Frosty) 55; *Ziggurat* 56, *57*

N.E. Thing Co., *Reflected Landscape 121*
Nash, Mark *376*
Nauman, Bruce 122, 126, 106, 156, *170*, 238; *Collection of Various Flexible Materials Separated by Layers of Grease with Holes the Size of My Waist and Wrists 101*; *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten Inch Intervals 101*; *Untitled 101*
Negret, Edgar 252
Neireles, Cildo 295
Nemukhin, Vladimir *182*
Nesbit, Molly 25
Neto, Ernesto *362*, *363*, *364*, 370, 371
Neuenschwander, Rivane 371
Nevelson, Louise 51, 63
"The New American Painting" (New York, 1959) 11
"New Institutionalism" (Munich, 2001–4; Malmo, 2000–4; Paris, 2002–6) 22
Newman, Barnett 50, 65, 211
Newman, Elizabeth 309, 310; *Honey in the Rock (Got to Feed God Children) 303*
"The New Realism" (The Hague, 1964) 12
"New Realists" (Sydney Janis Gallery, New York, 1962) 39–53, 42–7
Ngui, Matthew *346*, 354, 356; *Will You Talk To Me? 349*
Nicolaidis, George 126
Niemeyer, Oscar 23, *361*, 372
Nordman, Maria 239
"NUL 65" (Amsterdam, 1965) 12

O'Doherty, Brian 49–50
Obrist, Hans Ulrich 16, 25, 345, 346, 352–4, 355
Odufré, Joes 153
Oiticica, Helio 129, *364*, *365*, 370, 371; *Barracao Experiment 2 136*
Oldenburg, Claes 41, 44, *45*, 51, 52, 65, 106, 108, 109, 145, 156, 172; *From the Entropic Library* (with Coosje Van Bruggen) 286, *287*; *Model (Ghost) Medicine Cabinet 101*; *Mouse Museum* 17, *163*; *Mu Mu* 42, *43*; *Pants Pocket with Pocket Objects 101*; *Sculpture in the Form of a Trowel Stuck in the Ground 147*, *152*; *The Stove* 44, *45*; *Street Head II 101*
Oliva, Achille Bonito 16, *17*, *73*, 78
Omar, Arthur *362*, 363, *364*

Ono, Yoko 16
Oosterhof, Gosse 231
"Op Losse Schroeven" ("Square Pegs in Round Holes") (Amsterdam, 1969) 12, *14*, 97, 98, 145
Oppenheim, Dennis 107, 123, 125
Orozco, Gabriel 371
Osorio, Pepón, *The Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?) 321*
Otterness, Tom 191, *192*, 194, 195; *Man with Visible Insides 198*
Ozawa, Tsuyoshi 353, 356; *Nasubi Gallery 347*

Padilla, Juan Francisco Elso, *Por América (For America) 248*
Padua, Paul Mathias 172
Paik, Nam June 156; *TV Buddha 221*
Paladino, Mimmo 214
Paley, Maureen 266
Panamarneko 145, 146, 156, *169*
Panofsky, Erwin 173
Paolini, Giulio 239
Pardo, Jorg *332*, *333*
Park Fiction *381*
Park, Stephen *263*, 265
Parreno, Philippe 217, 336, 340, 342; *La Dolce Utopia* (with Maurizio Cattelan) 330, *331*, *332*; *Werktische I und II (Made on the 1st of May) 337*
Pascali, Pino, *Blue Widow 72*, 73, 79
Patiniot, Joe 156
Patterson, Matt *263*
Patterson, Richard *263*, 265
Patterson, Simon 264, 265; *Col. Michael Collins–Neil Alden Armstrong–Col. Edwin Eugene Aldrin Jr. 261*; *Richard Burton–Elizabeth Taylor 261*
Pedrosa, Adriano 359, 370, 371, 372
Pedrosa, Mario 19
Penck, A.R. 214
Petersen, Ad 29, *30*, 35
Phillips, Lisa 324
Piacentino, Gianni 77, 79, 80; *Black-Violet Marbled Object with Handrails 74*
Picasso, Pablo 48, 50, 200, 201, 205, 213
"Pier 18" (New York, 1971) 17
Pinchbeck, Peter *60*, 62
Pioppi, Maria *74*
Piper, Adrian 83, *84*, 85, 126
Pistoletto, Michelangelo 69, *71*, *76*, 77, 78, 79, 80, 105
"Places with a Past" (Charleston, NC, 1991) 297–310, *300–10*
Plagens, Peter 15, 115, 124–6, 325–6
Plate, Roberto 19
Politi, Giancarlo 20
Pollock, Jackson 65, 106, 211, 253, 339
Pop Art (Amsterdam, 1964) 12
Porter, Liliana, *This is a Woman 248*
Portillo, Lourdes 325
Potts, Don 108
"Primary Structures" (Jewish Museum, New York, 1966) 12, 23, 53–62, *56–60*
"Primitivism in 20th Century Art" (New York, 1984) 19, 285, 294
Prince, Richard 338
Prini, Emilio 74, *74*, 79, 156
Projansky, Robert 83
"Prospect 68" (Düsseldorf, 1969) *13*, 16
Pulsa Group 123

Rabin, Oscar 179, *184*, 185, 186, 188; *Two Violins 182*
Rabinowitch, Royden 239
Rae, Fiona *263*, 264, 265, 266
Raetz, Markus *100*, 112, 371
Raqs Media Collective, *Co-ordinate 28.8N 77.15E 381*
Rauschenberg 52
Rauschenberg, Robert 12, 29, *30*, *31*, *35*, 37, 38, 176
Raveel, Roger 239
Rawanchaikul, Navin *346*, 353, 354, 355; *Cinema Poster* (with Rirkrit Tiravanija) *347*
Ray, Charles 313, 324; *Family Romance 320*, 321; *Fire Truck* 314, *315*
Ray, Man 50, 126
Raysse, Martial 29, 37, *44*, 52; *Pump Torso 44*; *Raysse Beach 31*, 32, *33*
Read, Herbert 176
Reinhardt, Ad 124, 139
Reinke, Klaus Ulrich *160*
Reitz, Edgar 172
Renno, Rosângela *364*
Resnais, Alain 48
Restany, Pierre 16, 19, 41, 49, 51, 140, 172
Rhoades, Jason 342
Richard, Paul 323–4
Ricke, Rolf 106
Rinke, Klaus 156
Rio Branco, Miguel *364*, 370
Rivers, Larry 50
Robbe-Grillet, Alain 122
Robins, Corinne 66
Rockburne, Dorothea *160*
Rockefeller, Blanchette 140
Rockefeller, David 138
Rockefeller, Nelson 138, 141
Rockwell, Norman 51
Rodriguez Prampolini, Ida 251
Roehr, Peter 156
Rogers, Alva, *Five Rooms* (with Lorna Simpson) *303*
Rohm, Robert 126; *Classico 121*; *Untitled 119*
Romano, Sal 66
Rose, Barbara 64–65, 174, 214
Rosenberg, Harold 174–5
Rosenquist, James 41, *44*, 52; I Love You With My Ford 42, *43*,
Rosenthal, Norman 18, 205, 211, 214, 257
Ross, David 313, 324, 325–6
Rotella, Mimmo 52
Rothenberg, Susan 205
Rothko, Mark 41, 211
Rousseau, Ann Marie 199
Rückrien, Ulrich 156
Rukhin, Evgenii 182, 188
Rumma, Marcello 69, 71, *73*, 79, 80
Rupp, Christy 191, 196, *197*, *198*, 199, 200
Ruppersberg, Allen 109, 122, 126
Ruppersberg, Allen 109, 122, 126
Ruscha, Ed 109, 122, 123, 126, 145, 153, 156, *160*; *Dutch Details 146*
Ruthenbeck, Reiner *100*, 110, *170*
Ryman, Bob 107, 123, 125, *208*, 209, 213

Saam, Peter *104*
Saatchi, Charles 257
Saint Phalle, Niki de 29, *31*, 35, 37–8, 52; "Shooting Gallery" *34*
"Salao da Bussola" (Rio de Janeiro, 1969) 19
Salcedo, Doris 371
Salle, David 205
Salvadori, Remo 238
Samba, Cheri 295
Samo [Jean-Michel Basquiat] 199, 201
Sandback, Fred 108, 126, 156, *160*
Sandberg, Willem 12, 29, 34, *34*, 36, 176
Sandler, Irving 66
Sanejouand, Jean-Michel 146, 156
Sans, Jerome 22
Santos, René 253
São Paulo Biennial (1998) 12–13, 18, 19, 23, 357–72, *360–7*
Saret, Alan *100*, 106, 107
Schenidermann, D. 227
Schipper, Esther 266
Schippers, Wim T. 156; *Slightly Damaged Car 148*, 149
Schlegell, David von 62–3
Schnabel, Julian 205; *St Francis in Ecstasy 209*
Schubert, Karsten 266
Schult, H.A., *Biokinetic Landscape 167*
Schum, Gerry 153, 154, 156, 172
Scott, Joyce, *Believe I've Been Sanctified* 304, *305*, 308
Scott, Tim 55; *Peach Wheels 58*, 59
Second Havana Biennial (1986) 241–54, 244–50
Segal, George, *The Dinner Table* 46, *47*, 50, 51, 52
Seitz, William 52
Sekula, Allan 326
Sellman, Billie 257
Senise, Daniel 371
Serota, Nicholas 205, 211, 214, 257
Serra, Richard 15, 97, 106, 107, 109, 110, 123, 155, 156, *160*; *Shovel Plate, Prop, Close Pin Prop and Sign Board Prop* 98, *99*
Shanghai Biennial 20
Sharjah Biennial 20
Sharp, Willoughby 16, 17, 83, 107, 136
Sherman, Cindy 309, 310, 325
Sherry, Jane 198, *198*, 199
Shonibare, Yinka, *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation 383*
Shunk, Harry 17
Sibayan, Judy Freya 353, 355
Siegel, Eric 156
Siegelaub, Seth 15–16, 83, 84, *85*, *88*, 89, 92, 93, 107, 115, 122, 140; *Douglas Huebler: November 1968* 15; "January 1–31 1969, catalog 15; "March 1–31 1969" 15–16; "July, August, September 1969" 16; "The Xerox Book" (1968) 16
Silveira, Regina 361, 361
Simpson, Lorna 309; *Five Rooms* (with Alva Rogers) *303*; *Hypothetical 321*
Situationist International 29, 36–7
"Skin Fruit" (New York, 2010) 24
Smith, David 63, 214
Smith, Hendrick 188
Smith, Jack 192, 202
Smith, Kiki 191, *319*, 325
Smith, Roberta 214, 324–5
Smith, Tony 55, 56, 156; *Arch 148*, 149
Smithson, Robert 14, 62, 65, 66, 122, 123, 126, 145, 146, 153, 156, 159, *160*, 173, 338; *400 Seattle Horizons 116*, 117, 120, *120*; *Broken Circle 151*, *152*; *The Cryosphere* 56, 57; *Mirror Displacement 14*; *Spiral Hill 151*; *Spiral Jetty 132*
Snelson, Kenneth 145, 156; *Easy K 149*, *152*
Snow, Michael 156
Soares, Valeska 371
"Software" (New York, 1970) 12
Solomon, Alan 12
Sone, Yutaka, *Snow Leopard 347*
Sonnabend, Ileana 109
Sonnier, Keith 97, *100*, 106, 107, 110, 122, 125
"Sonsbeek 71" (Arnhem, 1971) 24, 143–56, *146–52*
Sottsass, Ettore 129, *136*
Souzea, Edgar de *362*, *363*
Spalletti, Ettore 238
Sperone, Gian Enzo 17
Spoerri, Daniel 29, *31*, *32*, 37, 51, 52; *Le Parc de Marcelle 44*
Spoleto Festival 299, 307–8, 308–9
"Stars" (Beijing, 1979) 19
Steinberg, Saul 51
Steiner, George 142
Stevenson, Harold, *Eye of Lightening Billy 44*, *46*
Stockholder, Jessica 310
Strelow, Hans 16
Superflex, *Guarana Power 25*
Sussman, Elizabeth 322, 324, 325, 326
Suvero, Mark di 64–5
Sydney Biennale 18
Sze, Sarah *351*, 354
Szeeman, Harald 13–15, *14*, 16, 21, 22, 69, 71, 97, *98*, *99*, 105–10, 110–11, 145, 159, *160*, 172–6

Taipei Biennial 23
Taki, Koji 352
Takis, Vassilakis 83
Tan, Aaron 354
Tang Song 281, 282; *Dialogue* (with Xiao Lu) 270, *271*
Taubman, A. Alfred 324
Tavins, Paula 176
Tayou, Pascale Marthine, *Game Station 380*
Tazzi, Pierre Luigi 238–9
Tegenbosch, Lambert 155
Télémaque, Hervé 252
Teshigahara, Hiroshi 285, 295
Thek, Paul 338; *Ark*, *Pyramid 164*, 165; *Visual Therapy–dedicated to Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen 235*
Théofilakis, Elie *218*
Theubet, Jean-Marie 105
Thiebaud, Wayne, *Salads, Sandwiches and Desserts* 44, *45*
Thompson, Robert Farris 253
"The Times Square Show" (New York, 1980) 189–202, *192–8*
Tinguely, Jean 12, 29, 35, 37, *47*, 52, 108; *Frigo Duchamp 46*; *Hommage à Anton Müller 34*; *Machine-Sculpture 34*
Tirana Biennial 20
Tiravanija, Rirkrit 25, 340, *347*, 353, 354, 355; *Cinema Poster* (with Navin Rawanchaikul) *346*; *Untitled (Free Exchange Bar)* 332, *333*
Tokoudagba, Cyprien *289*, 294
Topol, Robert 83, 86
Torres, Rigoberto, *Man in Blue* 196, *197*
Torres Llorca, Ruben, *I've Got*

You Under My Skin 249
"Traffic" (Bordeaux, 1996) 327–42, *330–7*
Trini, Tommaso *73*, 79, 80, 111
Troncy, Eric 329, 340
Truitt, Anne 55, 62; Sea Garden *59*
Tsingou, Emily 342
Tuchman, Maurice 109
Tucker, Marcia 15
Tucker, William 62; *Meru I, Meru II, Meru III* 56, *57*
"Tucumán is Burning" (Buenos Aires, 1968) *13*, 19
Tupitsyn, Margarita *182*
Tupitsyn, Viktor *182*, *184*
Turrell, James 109
Tuttle, Richard, *Pale Purple Canvas 100*

Uchôa, Hélio *361*
Ultvedt, Per Olof 29, *31*, *34*, *35*, 37, 40
"Utopia Station" (Venice, 2003) *25*

Vaisman, Meyer 371
Van Buren, Richard, *Free Upton 58*, 59
Van Dam, Erika (Chi Chi) 199
Van Der Marck, Jan 176
Van Gogh, Vincent 359, 369, 371, 372
Vantongerloo, Georges 63
Varejão, Adriana 370
Vautier, Ben *167*, *168*, *169*
Veilhan, Xavier *333*, 340; *The Fire* 330, *331*, *332*
Venice Biennale 12–13, *15*, 18, 19, 21, 23–4; "Dreams and Conflicts–The Viewer's Dictatorship" 25; "Utopia Station" (2003) *25*
Vercruysse, Jan 238
Verzotti, Giorgio 342
Vidokle, Anton 23–4
Viner, Frank 122, 107
Visser, Carel 156
Volten, André *148*, 149, *152*, 156

Walcott, Derek 389
Walden, Herwarth 19
Walker, John 213
Wall, Jeff 371; *Landscape Manual 134*
Walther, Franz Erhard *102*, 106
Wang Deren 269, 281, 282
Wang Du, *International Landscapes 347, 350*
Wang Guangyi, *Mass-Produced Nativity 275; Mao Zedong No.1 275*
Wang Jiong 280
Wang Yousheng *272*, *273*
Ward, Nari, *Fortress 23*
Warhol, Andy 41, 50, 51, 52, *132*, 153, 172, *210*, 213, 339; *200 Campbell Soup Cans* 42, *43*
Washburn, Gordon Bailey 12–13
Wearing, Gillian 342
Wechgelaar, Lex 146, 156
Wei Guangqing, *Suicide No. 1 274*
Weiner, Lawrence 83, *84*, 94, 107, 124, 156, *232*, 286; *A 36" x 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall 88*, 89, 102, *103*; *Two minutes of spray paint directly on the floor from a standard aerosol can 87*
Weiss, Rachel 244
Welling, Dolf 154–5
Wells, David 199, 200
Wentworth, Richard 257
Wesselmann, Tom 41, 46, *47*, 50, 52; *Still Life #17* 44, *45*, 46, *47*
West, Cornel 323
What, How & For Whom (WHW) 21
Wheeler, Douglas 109
Whitman, Robert 106
Whitney Biennial (New York, 1993) 18, 311–26, *314–21*, 389
"Who's Afraid of Jasper Johns?" (New York, 2010) 24
WHW 21
Wilde, Edy de 12, 105
Wilder, Nicholas 108
Wiley, William T. 108
William, Sue 325
Williams, Pat Ward 313, 324; *What You Lookn At?* 314, *315*
Wilson, Fred, *Re: Claiming Egypt 319*, 326; "Mining the Museum" (Baltimore, 1992–93) 17, *20*
Wilson, Ian 122
Winsor, Jackie 176
Winter, Robin (with Colen Fitzgibbon), *Gun Dollar Plate 198*
Witkin, Isaac 55, 63; *Vegas 58*, 59
Wittgenstein, Ludwig 139
Wojnarowicz, David *319*
Wong Hoy Cheong 355, 356
"Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art" (New York, 1966) *10*, 15
Wren, Christopher S. 185–6
Wu Shanzhuan 269, 281, 282
Wu Shaoxiang *276*
Wululu, Jimmy *289*
Wurtinger, Werner *346*

Xiao Lu 269, 281, 282; *Dialogue* (with Tang Song) 270, *271*
Xu Bing, *A Book From The Sky 275*
Xu Jin, *Yin Yan 275*
Xu Tan, *Made in China 351*, 352

Yang Zhilin *270*
Yanobe, Kenji, *Talking Machine 336*, 337
Young British Artists 257
Young, La Monte 170, *171*
Ysla, Herrera 251
Yu, Liew Kung *348*, 352, 354
Yuendumu community *286*, 294–5

Zaya, Octavio *376*
Zazeela, Marian 170, *171*
"Zeitgeist" (Berlin, 1983) *18*
Zhang Nian 269
Zhang Peili 356; *A Report on the Hepatitis Infection in 1988 277; X?* series *277*
Zhang Zhilin 280
Zhou Yan 279–80
Ziegler, Mel (with Kate Ericson) *Camouflaged History 301*, 310
Zittel, Andrea 329
Zorio, Gilberto 77, 79, *102*

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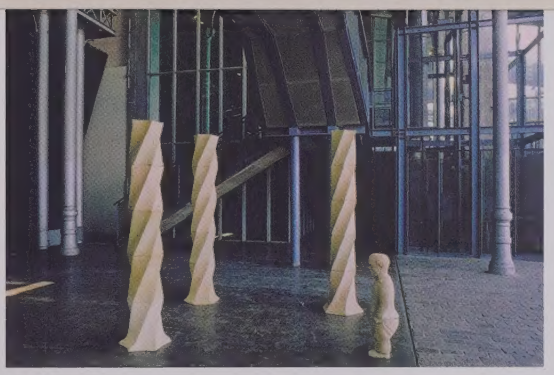
ISBN 978-0-7148-6495-2



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01 Dylaby, Amsterdam, 1962

02 New Realists, New York, 1962

03 Primary Structures, New York 1966

04 Arte + Povera + Azioni Povere, Amalfi, 1968

05 January 5-31, 1969, New York, 1969

06 When Attitudes Become Form, Bern, 1969

07 557,087, Seattle, 1969

08 Information, New York, 1970

09 Sonsbeek 71, The Netherlands, 1971

10 Documenta 5, Kassel, 1972

11 The Bulldozer Exhibition, Moscow, 1974

12 The Times Square Show, New York, 1980

Exhibitions are hubs of interaction within the art world, the places where artists, dealers, critics, and collectors come together, and where the newest art first comes before the public. *Biennials and Beyond* is the first book to position a range of contemporary exhibitions in the context of art history, providing installation photographs, exhibition floor plans and critical texts from the time, as well as an expansive account of recent exhibition history by Bruce Altshuler.

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